

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
16 July 2024
(13:30-15:45)
At Queen's Court

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman
Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary
Ron Wright, Non-Executive Director

Carole Howard, Office Administrator
Jenny Douglass, Community Support Assistant

Carol Dennis, Di Old, and Val Perry Members

1 Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received for the absence of Jenny Gregory and Dawn Ladbrook

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 11 June 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

Arising from minute 10 – E&V visits – it was noted that the UTC aspect of A&E services at Queen's Hospital had shown considerable improvement since the internal layout of the hospital had been reorganised earlier this year. Healthwatch had been asked to carryout a series of "mystery shopper" visits to Queen's Hospital, Harold Wood Polyclinic UTC and GP premises (see minute – below). A particular focus of the visits would be to ascertain the effectiveness of hearing loop installations for hearing aid users.

It was also noted that the Company Secretary would be giving a presentation about the E&V visit to the Polyclinic UTC the day following this meeting to the Safeguarding Adults Board .

4 Finance Report

The Finance Report for June was submitted.

There was nothing in the Report to which attention needed to be drawn.

Expenditure for the month was £11,204, which is slightly higher than recent monthly outgoings. Among the reasons for this were the hire of rooms for the Long COVID Focus Groups (see below), some annual charges, a social event, higher than usual travel expenses and some general price increases.

The contract funding for the second quarter of the year (July-September) was received early.

Bank balances at the end of the month were noted.

The Company Secretary reported that, unless additional income could be generated, there was a risk that there would be an overspend by the end of the financial year.

5 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

The Chairman reported that the recent HPbP meeting (the day before this meeting) had been taken up by an important discussion of the implications of the recent Ofsted finding that Children's Services were Inadequate overall. The Ofsted report had been critical of almost all aspects of the service's work, although Ofsted also noted that work to address the concerns had begun immediately and was underway to strengthen these services.

A range of issues had contributed to this position, including:

- The need for increased funding for education and child services (which may have implications for other services)
- A need for improved co-operation between schools and the Service and an improvement in the educational attainments.
- Recognition that there was a need to place a greater focus on the issue of child safeguarding as the level of child abuse in the borough was far higher than generally realised (hence the NSPCC PANTS project – see minute 8 following)
- The increasing numbers of children in the care system

Staff recruitment and training were a key priority. The waiting list for assessments was the longest in London.

6 NHS North East London/North East London Health and Care Partnership

No matters were reported.

7 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old reported there had been little change from her previous report.

8 Engagement projects - update

- **Long COVID**

- Payment (£500) for the focus group work had been received.

The report on the focus group work was being drafted and would be published in August.

The project team was now considering establishing a peer support group for Long COVID patients, as existing such groups are not specific to Long COVID and often inappropriate for Long COVID patients, and one possibility was that, subject to funding arrangements being agreed, Healthwatch would co-ordinate the support group's arrangements.

- **NHS Dentistry in NEL**

- NHSNEL had recently launched its own survey, which was being promoted by Healthwatch.

- **Creative Health Havering**

- There has been no developments in this project.

- **North East London Research Engagement Network (REN)**

- The REN survey had been completed and the results were awaited.

- **Enter & View visits**

- The report on the Mealtime visits at Queen's Hospital was being finalised for pre-publication clearance with staff at BHRUT.

The report on the visits to A&E was on hold, given the major changes that have been made. A further visit was in hand.

A visit to the Greenwood Practice was also in hand [subsequent to the meeting, this visit was postponed for a week following a world-wide outage of IT facilities affecting the practice]. Other visits under the programme were being planned.

- **Patient Participation Groups (PPG)**

- The appointment of the new postholder who would be working on PPGs for NHSNEL was still awaited. Once the appointee was in

place, arrangements would be made to work with the HPbP/NHSNEL, PCNs and individual GP practices to restart PPGs across the borough.

- **Mystery Shopping – provision of Hearing Loop systems at health facilities**

- BHRUT had requested a “Mystery Shopper” exercise, to check the effectiveness of Hearing Loops in Queen’s Hospital, particularly within the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). Arrangements for this were in hand.
- To complement that, it was intended also to carry out a similar exercise at Harold Wood Polyclinic/UTC and various GP surgeries over the coming months.

- **Smoking cessation – focus groups**

- Public Health Havering were seeking a focus group exercise with, in particular, people who are “routine and manual” workers, to “find out what challenges there are with quitting and motivators”, following an increase in the population of the borough who are smokers working in “R&M” occupations from 9% in 2020 to over 28% in 2023.

In addition to Healthwatch Havering, three commercial organisations and Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham had been invited to submit bids for the project. It was, however, noted that the timescale for the project clashed with other projects that were being considered.

Following discussion, it was agreed in principle that:

- (a) a bid be prepared and submitted; and
- (b) possibility of bidding jointly with HW B&D be explored.

The Charman and Company Secretary were authorised to decide whether to bid, based on the outcome of discussions with HW B&D.

- **NSPCC Pants Campaign**

- A survey aiming to find out grandparents’ understanding of the Pants Campaign, and to raise awareness of it, was being prepared. It would be carried out in October, to coincide with expected national publicity from the NSPCC.

9 St George’s Centre - progress

The Chairman reported that there was progress with the building development.

Café

An operator for the proposed café had now been chosen. The aim of the café was to attract all age groups in the local community, helping to bring community cohesion and inclusion. The café would be available at weekends and early

evening to support both clinical care and possibly other activities such as Yoga, Tai Chi, Chess club – there were enormous opportunities.

GP practice

Owing to unexpected delays in the completion of construction works, the building would now be opening in September 2024. The Upminster Bridge Practice would then be relocating to the Centre but, as it had to move from its present premises before then, it would be moving temporarily to the South Hornchurch Health Centre on 14 August.

Arrangements were being made to ensure that all patients of the practice were aware of the details of these changes. All the existing practice team will be transferring, there would be no decrease in the number of appointments available, home visits would continue to be available to eligible people and the booking system remained the same. The practice would be renamed St George's Country Park Surgery.

10 Next meeting

The next meeting was due on Tuesday, 17 September 2024 at the office. There would be no need for a meeting in August.

_____ Chairman