

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
21 January 2025
(13:30-15:40)
By video conference

Present:

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

Jenny Douglass, Community Support Assistant

Dawn Ladbrook, Di Old and Val Perry Members

1 Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received for the absence of Carol Dennis, Jenny Gregory and Carole Howard.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 26 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

There were no matters arising.

4 Finance Report

(a) Finance Report for November

The report for November was submitted.

Expenditure for the month had been £10,734, which was broadly in line with recent monthly outgoings.

The bank balances at the end of the month were noted.

There was nothing to which attention needed to be drawn.

(b) Finance Report for December

The report for December was submitted.

Expenditure for the month had been £12,468, which was broadly in line with recent monthly outgoings. Expenditure had included the December Awayday, the Christmas celebration and Corporation Tax for 2023/24. The final payment for 2024/25 had also been received.

The bank balances at the end of the month were noted.

(c) Employers' National Insurance Contributions

The claim for Employment Allowance (EA) had been successful. In consequence, a refund of £5,000 was due and accordingly no payment was due to HMRC for either January or February and the payment in March would be less than usual.

A refund for previous years' EA payments was expected to be received in due course.

(d) NHSNEL - financial support for Healthwatch

The support payment from NHSNEL would shortly be available, providing £5,000 further income for the year.

5 Healthwatch office

The owners of Queen's Court, RMS, had given formal notice of their intention to close the building as an office centre, and convert it to flats. They had offered an alternative office in another block they own, St James's House, a block on the corner of Eastern Road and Romford Ring Road/Mercury Gardens, some 200 yards further along Eastern Road from Queen's Court.

The new office had been offered on the same terms as the existing office (principally rental of £1,550 per month). RMS would meet the cost of moving the office equipment to the new location. Meeting rooms would be available for use when needed.

The Board confirmed acceptance of the offer of new accommodation.

6 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

The Chairman reported that the A&E services at Queen's Hospital remained under considerable stress. Efforts were being made to recruit GPs to work in A&E; PELC had experienced a 10% increase in patient attendance at the UTCs in both Queen's Hospital and the Harold Wood Polyclinic. It was useful that two of our volunteers were able to provide first-hand insights on developments at the hospital.

The new St George's Centre had opened with the new GP practice in place and other facilities gradually building up. It was now being managed by a Partnership Board (on which Healthwatch was represented).

Healthwatch had been asked to support a PbP project to find out more about patients' views of the availability of Same Day Care (GP) Hubs.

The terms of reference for the PbP Board had been reviewed and revised. Healthwatch remained a member of the Board but was no longer required to attend the meetings of the ICB Havering Sub-Committee.

Following a finding that just 1% of the population consumed 80% of all hospital care, an analysis tool was being developed to analyse usage patterns for urgent and emergency care in an effort to improve the efficient use of services.

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

The Board were advised that the current deficit for NHSNEL was of the order of £63 million, which was likely to increase by the end of the financial year. Among a range of cost pressures was the high level of attendances at A&E services.

8 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old advised that there had been little change in the general position that safeguarding remained a concern at many care homes and there had been very few reports on health and social care facilities in Havering by the CQC in recent months.

It was agreed that a meeting should be sought with the local CQC team to discuss these concerns in the New Year.

The Chairman reported that new Multi-Agency arrangements for Safeguarding had recently be published, requiring all involved to share information and audits.

9 Engagement projects - update

- **Long COVID**
 - Expressions of interest were being sought from people living with Long COVID in becoming facilitators for Peer Support Groups (PSGs). In addition, the possibility of appointing a coordinator for PSGs from within the social prescribers working in GP practices in Havering was being explored.
- **NHS Dentistry in NEL**
 - This project remained on hold pending a response from NHSNEL.
- **Creative Health Havering**
 - Healthwatch Essex had held their exhibition at the Mercury Mall over the Christmas/New Year. They were arranging a programme of exhibitions over the coming year and the possibility of one at the St George's Centre would be explored.
- **Enter & View visits**
 - The report of the E&V visit to the ELIFAR facilities (formerly Lilliputs), Cherry Tree and The Farmhouse in Wingletye Lane had been published; the postponed visit to The Paddocks would be taking place shortly.
 - The report on the visits to A&E at Queens Hospital was now with BHRUT, PELC and the LAS for the correction of any errors.
 - The initial visit to the new St George's Centre had taken place on 4 December. A formal E&V visit would take place around Easter time.
 - E&V visits to Boots Pharmacies in Romford were being arranged.
- **Defibrillators in Havering**
 - Contact with the LAS has produced a list of the locations in Havering known to them where defibrillators (defibs) are available. There are about 180 such locations but the LAS have identified a need for at least one further defib in each of the following areas: Havering Park/Chase Cross, Rise Park, Hylands and Elm Park West. They have asked for help in identifying possible locations in those areas.
An initial survey of defibrillator locations was underway.
- **Veteran Friendly Framework programme**
 - Following a recent meeting, arrangements were in hand to publicise the Framework locally. Contact would be made with the Care Home Association to encourage its take up within care homes.
 - A meeting would shortly to be held with the Council's lead officer for Supported Housing, who was keen to improve the offer for veterans.

- **LAS Maternity Survey**

- HW Barking & Dagenham were carrying out a project on behalf of the LAS to examine the service provided to maternity patients. To support that, a focus group would take place at the St George's Centre and a survey would be promoted to local organisations.

The Board were pleased to note that this booking was the first for the community rooms at the Centre.

- **Survey of "prevention service" users**

- Havering Council were considering a survey of users of what they call "prevention services" prior to seeking bids for new contracts and had enquired whether Healthwatch would help with arranging focus groups to explore major issues.

10 St George's Centre - progress

The Centre had now opened and services were gradually relocating there.

It was noted that Healthwatch had been given a place on the Centre's management board. and an oral update will be given at the meeting.

11 Any other business

The Board noted that:

- (1) The planned redevelopment of Whipps Cross Hospital had been delayed and was now unlikely to proceed until after 2030. It was not yet clear what, if any, knock-on effect with would have for BHRUT hospitals, although any chance of finance becoming available for major works to upgrade A&E services might be at risk.
- (2) A new Chair had been appointed for the BHRUT Board, Ms Sarah Betteley, who was also Chair of Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.
- (3) Following the Community Chest funding for hearing loops to be provided at the PELC UTCs at both Queen's Hospital and the Harold Wood Polyclinic, Healthwatch had visited those locations to carry out a "mystery shopper" review of the loop systems. At both locations, the systems had been found to be working and that staff knew how to make use of them.

12 Confidential Business

The Board considered two items of confidential business that related to business continuity.

13 Next meeting

The next meeting would be on 11 February 2025, at the office.

_____ Chairman