

**MINUTES**  
**of a meeting of the Governance Board**  
**11 February 2025**  
**(13:30-15:50)**  
**At Queen's Court**

**Present:**

**Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman**  
**Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary**

**Carole Howard, Office Administrator**  
**Jenny Douglass, Community Support Assistant**

**Jenny Gregory and Di Old, Members**

**1 Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received for the absence of Carol Dennis, Dawn Ladbrook, Val Perry and Ron Wright

**2 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations.

**3 Minutes of meeting held 21 January 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2025 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 January

The report for January was submitted.

Expenditure for the month had been £10,802, 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) Employers' National Insurance Contributions

The application for Employment Allowance (EA) had been successful and the refund of £5,000 was being made by discounting from payments due to HMRC resulting no payments being made to HMRC for January or February and a lower-than-normal payment for March. In 2025/26, no payment would be due for Employers' NICs as the EA threshold was being raised to a higher level than would have been payable.

A refund of some previous years' payments was receivable but how it would be paid was not yet clear.

(d) NHSNEL - financial support for Healthwatch

The support payment from NHSNEL has not yet been received but was expected to arrive soon.

## **5 Healthwatch office**

Preliminary discussion with RMS had indicated that the new office would be about the same size as that currently occupied, on the ground floor of St James House facing Eastern Road and about half way along the building. A meeting room and kitchen/rest area would be available nearby.

There was no indication yet as to when the move will take place.

## **6 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)**

Services at Queen's Hospital remained a concern: not just A&E but the discharge process and, in particular, how it related to care homes. Measures under consideration included retaining all year-round a bank of care home beds to which patients could be discharged while longer-term arrangements for them were considered and put in place.

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

Marie Gabriel, the Chair of NHSNEL and the Partnership, had been made a Dame of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year Honours list. In reply to congratulations sent to her on behalf of Healthwatch Havering, Dame Marie had commented:

“Thank you so much, that is so kind. One person never progresses on their own, so this is recognition for all the work that we do to improve outcomes with and for our residents. However these thanks are particularly important as they are from Healthwatch, and my health career started through my involvement in my local Community Health Council, the forerunner, forerunner, forerunner of Healthwatches!”

The Board noted that NHSNEL continued to be under considerable financial pressure as a result of overspending at all of the local NHS provider organisations. One issue was that both NELFT and ELFT had contracts for providing services in areas well outside NEL and there was concern that this was a distraction from their core activities in the ICS area.

## **8 Safeguarding and Quality - update**

Ms Old reported that a new head of Quality and Safeguarding was now in post and she was requesting greater details of the issues reported at meetings. Concern remained that establishments were not reporting safeguarding incidents.

The Havering Safeguarding Adults Board had recently published a formal Report about the deaths of three patients who had been discharged from hospital to home without adequate care arrangements for them having been made. The report included reference to the recent E&V visits to A&E services at Queen’s Hospital and included an action plan that set out a number of steps for involved agencies to take in order to secure improvements in the discharge process.

## **9 Engagement projects - update**

- **Long COVID**

- NHSNEL had recently announced that it was withdrawing funding from Long COVID clinics; it was not yet clear whether this would have an impact on the proposed development of peer support groups.

As a separate initiative, the borough’s sports organisation – Everyone Active – were offering “Long COVID cafes” and it was agreed that the possibility of co-operating with them should be investigated.

- **Creative Health Havering**

- Healthwatch Essex had held their exhibition at the Mercury Mall over the Christmas/New Year.

Recently, the HW Essex representative was shown around the three shopping centres in Romford Town Centre (the Mercury, the Liberty and the Brewery), as a result of which she had approached the

Liberty's management to see if there was any prospect of being able to use a vacant shop there for the exhibition.

If the exhibition was accepted, HW Essex would want to work in partnership with HW Havering in arranging the exhibition.

- **Enter & View visits**

- The postponed visit to The Paddocks had now taken place and the report was being drafted.
- The report on the visits to A&E at Queens Hospital was now with BHRUT/PELC/LAS for correction of any errors.
- A follow-up visit to the Greenwood GP practice was being arranged.
- Visits to the two Boots Pharmacies in Romford Town Centre were in hand.
- Following the initial visit to the new St George's Centre in December, a formal E&V visit was being planned for around Easter time.
- It was agreed that the bank of questions used for E&V visits should be reviewed and updated.

- **Defibrillators in Havering**

- Contact with the LAS had produced a list of the locations in Havering known to them where defibrillators (defibs) are available. About 180 such locations had been identified. An initial survey of these locations was in hand; preliminary reports, however, indicated that only about 5% of them were easily accessible by the public in an emergency.

As a result of this project, the LAS have been put in touch with a church group in Rise Park (one of the LAS's priority areas) that is willing to host a defib.

- **Veteran Friendly Framework programme**

- Following a recent meeting, arrangements were in hand to publicise the Framework locally. Contact had been made with the Care Home Association to encourage its take up within care homes.
- A meeting is shortly to be held with the Council's lead officer for Supported Housing, who is keen to improve the offer for veterans.

- **LAS Maternity Survey**

- Unfortunately, Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham's focus group session at the St George's Centre had been cancelled as insufficient people had responded to the invitation to attend it.

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

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

Following a meeting to discuss this project, an indication of the Council's intentions was awaited.

- **Access to GP services**

- In addition to the long-term desire to work with GP practices to promote the usefulness of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), two other projects had recently been proposed that were linked to that.
  1. Same Day Access Hubs (GP Hubs): NHSNEL had enquired whether Healthwatch could carry out a survey to ascertain what (if any) understanding local people had of the Same Day Access Hubs service (also known as GP Hubs). A specification of their requirements had been received and was being worked on; and
  2. Access to GPs for homeless people: NHSNEL was carrying out a project to improve homeless people's access to GP services and had asked for assistance in finding out how GPs in the borough related to the homeless. A meeting was being arranged to find out more about what the project needed.

It was agreed that the three strands of work related to one another and formed the basis for further work.

## **10 Safeguarding**

In December, the Chairman of the Havering Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards had advised that new Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) had been put in place.

Although HW Havering had no dealings with children (or places where children might reasonably be expected to be found) as part of their core activity, it was considered prudent to ensure that all involved in Healthwatch activity had a general understanding of Safeguarding for Children as well as for Adults and a review of members' current Safeguarding understanding was under way.

## **11 Men's Health issues**

The Chairman proposed that a brief survey be undertaken to find out how men approached looking after their own health issues. She was proposing that men attending venues such as the Indoor Bowling Club should be asked to complete a questionnaire aimed at understanding what they knew about the risks to their health and how they could address them.

**12 Next meeting**

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman