
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 5th March and
2nd April 2013**

Matters for Information

54. HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL: PROGRESS AND PLANS

The Panel has received a presentation from representatives of Circle Healthcare and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital on the Hospital's progress and plans since Circle took over responsibility for operating Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust through a ten-year franchise agreement. Members' attention has been drawn to a number of areas that have worked well since Circle took over the management of the Hospital on 1st February 2012 together with the areas which have worked less well but are in the process of being reviewed and improved.

The Panel has been acquainted with the main terms of the franchise agreement. The agreement places an obligation on Circle to ensure the Hospital has a balanced budget and a positive cash flow and to meet any losses up to a cumulative value of £5m. It also states that Circle will seek to repay the Hospital's historic debt of £40m over the ten-year franchise period but this is not a requirement. The agreement includes a clause which enables either party to terminate the contract. The Hospital's Trust Board is responsible for approving Circle's Business Plan and budget, overseeing the terms of the management contract and monitoring the financial and operational performance of the Hospital.

At the end of the first year of operation, Circle has committed to making a Franchise Support Payment of £3.7m from its own funds to balance the Hospital's budget. Circle has always expected the first year of the agreement to be the most difficult in which to break even and the Hospital's historic debt figure has increased from that referred to during the bidding process. Whilst questions have been raised about the Franchise Support Payment in the local press, it is argued that this action demonstrates Circle's commitment to the Hospital as they are investing in its future. Circle has assured the Panel that they will be able to meet the many challenges that lie ahead at the Hospital as well as its financial targets.

The Panel has concerns over the reported low levels of employee morale at the Hospital. The Hospital's representatives have explained that this has to be considered in the context of a number of

changes which have taken place at the Hospital over the year. The Trust Board expects improvements to be made, for example, through active engagement with staff. This will include Open Surgeries with the Chief Executive, one to one discussions with frontline staff and communicating messages via the employee newsletter.

The Panel has discussed a number of matters including the ratio of patients to staff particularly when individual patients require a higher level of care, the successes of the Community Transition Unit, the adoption of a 24/7 approach to care and services across the Hospital, Ambulance service turnaround times and the continued need to find operational efficiency savings. Members have been assured that Circle will not reduce the number of services provided at the Hospital and there is a strong desire to deliver more for less whilst encouraging a greater number of patients to utilise the services available at Hinchingsbrooke.

Members have examined the Hospital's position with regard to the Liverpool Care Pathway, the various methodologies employed to seek patient and staff feedback, the additional services introduced at the Hospital over the course of the previous year, the integrated care approach adopted by the Hospital and its response to recent statements by the Government's Public Accounts Committee about District General Hospitals. The impact of financial issues facing Peterborough and Stamford NHS Trust on Hinchingsbrooke Hospital is currently unclear. Other matters discussed include the Hospital's interface with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups and the latest position with regard to delayed discharges.

The Deputy Chief Executive of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital has undertaken to provide the Panel with details of how funds generated from car parking charges are spent, the level of IT access available to Consultants at weekends and general handling of complaints at the Hospital. These have been conveyed to Members outside of the meeting.

Representatives of Circle and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital will return in a year's time to deliver a further update on the Hospital's progress and plans for the future.

55. HUNTINGDONSHIRE MATTERS

The Panel has received a presentation from the Corporate Team Manager on Huntingdonshire Matters. It is an initiative established by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board which aims to bring local communities and organisations together to identify and tackle the key challenges that face the District. Members have been provided with an outline of the steps taken since June 2012 to engage with communities and organisations, the various thematic issues that have arisen during engagement events and the three themes which have now been adopted as priority areas for Huntingdonshire, namely Older People, Skills and Education and Younger People. Each of these priority areas feed into one of the thematic groups established under the HSP; that is, the Health and

Well-Being, Growth and Infrastructure and Children and Young Peoples thematic groups respectively. These groups are responsible overall for implementing projects in the priority areas.

The Panel has been acquainted with the work of the HSP Board over the last year. This includes the agreement of a new Memorandum of Understanding, widening of the membership of the HSP Board, alignment of existing work groups and active community capacity building. The HSP Board will shortly be reassessing local needs and ways of working to inform its future work programme.

The Panel is of the opinion that all Members should be involved in the Huntingdonshire Matters process in accordance with the principles of localism as part of their community leadership roles. It has, therefore, been suggested that reference to it should be made within the Town and Parish Council Charter. It has further been suggested that the service directory established under the Older People priority should include services for the disabled.

In the next phase of its work Huntingdonshire Matters will focus on Member participation. An event on this subject will be held on 21st May 2013. Details are to be circulated to all Members.

56. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels undertaken by a joint Working Group comprising Members from each of the Panels has been reported to the Panel. The review reveals that the Panels are generally acting effectively in discharging their responsibilities and fulfilling their terms of reference. A number of opportunities for improvement have been identified and will be incorporated within an action plan that will be subject to review by the Working Group.

With reference to the conclusions reached by the Working Group that all acronyms should be explained in full, the Panel has suggested that a glossary of all terms should be produced. Members are also supportive of a suggestion that a glossary is included within Committee/Panel reports.

Members have welcomed the practice employed by the Economic Well-Being Panel of appointing Member Champions. They have also endorsed a suggestion that the Chairmen of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels should meet with the Executive Leader to discuss opportunities for earlier scrutiny of and involvement in the formulation of policy. Other matters discussed include the frequency of Panel meetings, the need for the Cabinet to respond formally to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and a suggestion that an Action Log of minor issues that require follow up action is introduced.

The Panel has discussed ways of encouraging greater public participation in its work and agrees with the Working Group that the

use of social media, as well as the Shape Your Place website, should be explored. Following discussion on the use of press releases, Officers have been requested to issue a press release on their deliberations on Hinchingsbrooke Hospital as a means of raising the profile of the Panel's work.

57. HEALTHWATCH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Panel has received a presentation from the Chairman of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire on the establishment of a local Healthwatch to replace the former Local Involvement Network (LINK). It is a statutory requirement under the Social Care Act 2012 that a local Healthwatch is in place. Its purpose is to be an independent consumer champion for users of health and social care services. The Act identifies other key roles in the new arrangements, including the provision of signposting and advocacy services to the residents of Cambridgeshire. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will not be responsible for the latter until next year. The importance of establishing good working relationships with interested stakeholders has been highlighted by the Chairman of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and the challenges currently being faced at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital have been acknowledged.

A consultant has been employed by Cambridgeshire County Council to assist with the establishment of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and has undertaken a number of activities such as the delivery of stakeholder engagement events which have successfully brought together key partners from the voluntary and community sector.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire began operating on 1st April 2013. It is in the final stages of becoming a company limited by guarantee. There is a small Board of three Non-Executive Directors in addition to the Chairman. The first meeting of the Board will consider a vision and priorities for the future. A Chief Executive and four Co-ordinators have been appointed, two of whom are former LINK employees.

The Panel has discussed a number of matters including the role of the Clinical Commissioning Groups in scrutinising Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, the methods of engagement to be employed by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, the functions of Healthwatch England, proposals to develop role descriptions for volunteers, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's accountability and reporting mechanisms with Cambridgeshire County Council and the importance of working in partnership and liaising with community and voluntary sector organisations. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire has a two year contract with the County Council with an indicative budget of £221,000 for the 2013/14 financial year. It will have a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and can alert Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission and Monitor about any concerns it has relating to specific care providers or general health and social care matters. Its representatives also have the ability to enter and view services to determine if they are operating effectively. It will be a challenge for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire to encourage increased levels of reporting on patient experiences to enable it to fulfil its roles.

58. HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has continued to monitor the effects of Government changes to the Housing Benefits system arising from the Welfare Reform Act. It remains a concern that housing benefit claimants renting in the private sector might not be fully aware of the impact of the changes as only a small proportion of residents have contacted the Council about this to date. There is also concern that claimants may be building up rent arrears on their homes.

The Panel has noted that Luminus has recruited two part-time employees to assist its tenants to move into appropriately sized accommodation. This will help to resolve the problems associated with households' over and under occupancy of their accommodation. However, Registered Social Landlords appear to be working in isolation from one another on this and it has been suggested that a more collaborative approach to the impact of the welfare reforms should be adopted across the District.

The Panel has been acquainted with how benefits are calculated for claimants wishing to sub-let a room or take in a lodger. Clarification has been received of the level of resources that are available to help residents to deal with the consequences of the welfare reforms. Arising from this discussion, the Panel has requested information on the demands on the Call Centre in this respect. This information will be circulated to Panel Members together with details of the Council's Rent Deposit scheme and the homelessness budget.

Other matters that the Panel has discussed include the correspondence produced by Registered Social Landlords to advise tenants of the reform changes, the utilisation of discretionary housing payments, the introduction of universal credits, the homelessness prevention projects being undertaken by the Council, the levels of engagement with voluntary sector organisations providing advisory services within the District, likely trends in fraud levels and associated enforcement activity and the exemptions which exist for residents with mental health problems.

At the Panel's request, a monthly update on the welfare reforms will be included within the Member's Brief newsletter. The Panel has conveyed its gratitude to the Head of Customer Services and her Team for their efforts during the implementation of the welfare reforms.

59. SOCIAL VALUE WORKING GROUP

The Panel has received an update from the Social Value Working Group on progress of its investigations to date. Research evidence of the social, financial and health benefits of One Leisure has been compiled. An attempt will now be made to attach financial values to these benefits. Once this has been completed, a detailed account of the methodology used to undertake this work will be prepared.

60. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS, WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Panel has received an update from Councillor R J West on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults, Well-Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which include the County Council's Budget proposals for Adult Social Care as set out in its Business Plan 2013/14, a review of delayed discharge and discharge planning, access to inpatient mental health care, progress against the Adult Social Care Integrated Plan 2012/13 and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group's progress and plans. Having regard to the Committee's discussions on mental health, the Panel has requested an update on the impact of the redesign of mental health services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Other Matters of Interest

61. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. A meeting of the Voluntary Sector Working Group has been held to consider a question by Councillor P J Downes at the February meeting of the Council on the Interim Advice Service. The Notes of the meeting have been circulated to Panel Members and to Councillor Downes for information. The Chief Executive of Rural Cambs CAB has attended a recent meeting of the Town Council and the organisation is now operating from the Town Hall, Huntingdon.

The Chairman has delivered an update on the outcome of his discussions with the Deputy Executive Leader in respect of the North West Huntingdonshire pilot Local Joint Committee. The Panel is disappointed that the pilot has not been effectively established in the last year and some other Members of the Council share this view. The absence of a mechanism to deal with issues on a scale greater than Ward level is a particular concern. As a way forward, the Panel has formally requested the Cabinet to reconsider its recommendation that a series of pilot Local Joint Committees are introduced across the District.

62. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members have been reminded of the opportunity they have to participate in the studies should they wish.

63. NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has been acquainted with the current Notice of Executive Decisions at each of its meetings. The Panel will have sight of the items entitled Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Shared Service – Annual Operating Service and Town and Parish Council Charter prior to their submission to the Cabinet.

Owing to concerns raised by other Members on the level of expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants, the Panel has agreed to review this matter. Information will be provided for this purpose in June in conjunction with the HIA Shared Service – Annual Operating report. In addition, the Panel has tasked the Voluntary Sector Working Group with seeking permission from the Executive Councillors for Healthy and Active Communities and for Resources to have an input into their decisions relating to the Community Chest Allocations for 2013/14.

64. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman