

SELECT COMMITTEE ON GOOD HEALTH

Thursday 26th January 2006 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2, Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Burt (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Faulkner (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Ali, Boys, Harley, Musk, Ms Nicholls, Rahman and K Turner

OFFICERS:-

The Head of Personnel and Support Services (Lead Officer to the Committee), Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Assistant Director Children's Social Care, Assistant Director of Finance, Scrutiny Officer to the Committee (Good Health), Research Officer (Good Health) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law & Property).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:-

Mr S Coneys - Strategic Health Authority
Mr M Cooke - Interim Chief Executive - Dudley Primary Care Trusts
Ms M Ingram - Project Manager for Primary Care Trust Merger
Mr D Ibbs - Chairman, Dudley South Primary Care Trust
Mr A Edwards - Chairman of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust
Mr L Williams - Director of Corporate Development,
Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust
Mr G Barker - Dudley South Patient and Public Involvement Forum

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th November, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest, in accordance with Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members for the reasons indicated:-

Councillor Ali, in respect of agenda item 5 - Presentations by the Strategic Health Authority on (a) Primary Care Trust mergers, (b) Strategic Health Authority mergers and (c) Ambulance Service Mergers, in view of his employment by a Primary Care Trust in the Black Country.

Councillor Boys, in respect of any matter on the Agenda relating to his employment as an Account Manager for McKesson and provider to Dudley Trusts of their Child Health, Mental Health, Finance and Payroll Systems (Computing and IT).

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Aston and Islam.

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PRESENTATIONS BY THE STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY ON
(A) PRIMARY CARE TRUST MERGERS
(B) STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY MERGERS
(C) AMBULANCE SERVICE MERGERS

Steve Coneys of the Strategic Health Authority gave a presentation on consultation on new Primary Care Trust arrangements across Birmingham and the Black Country; consultation on new Strategic Health Authority arrangements in the West Midlands and on National Consultation on a new configuration of Ambulance Service Trusts. A copy of the presentation was circulated at the meeting.

In respect of the Primary Care Trust arrangements, of the two proposed options the preferred option was Option 1 involving a reduction from twelve to eight Primary Care Trusts which would involve the merger of the two Dudley Primary Care Trusts to create a single trust for Dudley.

In respect of the Strategic Health Authority mergers the proposal was that there be a reduction from three Strategic Health Authorities across the West Midlands to the creation of one Authority. This proposal it was considered would reduce management and administrative costs by approximately £7.5 million to be reinvested in front line services. The proposal would also involve a new role for the Strategic Health Authority including that of ensuring high quality commissioning with Primary Care Trusts fit for purpose.

In respect of the Ambulance Service the local proposal was to create one West Midlands wide Ambulance Service, instead of the current four Ambulance Service Trusts, covering the area currently served by Staffordshire, West Midlands and Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester and Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance Services. It was stressed that the proposal did not include any proposals to change the model of service provision locally or local control centres and that Local Delivery Units were envisaged to ensure local focus was maintained. Savings of approximately £3 million were envisaged arising from the proposal.

Once the three consultations concluded on 22nd March, 2006, in respect of the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trusts within three weeks of that date the Strategic Health Authority would make its recommendations to the Department of Health on the basis of responses received during the consultation whilst in respect of the Ambulance Service within two weeks of the end of the consultation the Strategic Health Authority would forward responses received during the consultation to the Department of Health. Final decisions on future structures would be made by the Secretary of State for Health.

If the proposals progressed as envisaged the new Ambulance Service would come into effect from July 2006 whilst the new Strategic Health arrangement would be effective from July/September 2006 with the proposals in respect of Primary Care Trusts effective from September/October 2006.

Arising from the presentation given Members commented on and asked questions regarding various of the points raised including reference to the fact that there would be a further white paper in February regarding child health based and community based services which were not therefore included in the consultations referred to which were about management and organisational change only and not about the provision of front line services; concerns expressed about the envisaged savings failing to materialise and therefore having an impact on front line services in response to which it was considered that given revised arrangements and developments in methods of operation for example payment by results, patient choice and practice based commissioning envisaged savings should be available without any detriment to front line services indeed it was proposed that such services would be expanded; that the Birmingham and Black Country Strategic Health Authority was in balance financially whilst the current two Primary Care Trusts for Dudley had a current surplus therefore the position in this area was much more favourable as regards change than that reported on by the media in respect of other areas of the Country; that despite natural anxiety from staff members when the proposals were raised the Primary Care Trusts had a good recruitment and retention policy with positive results arising from a recent staff survey so that this aspect was not envisaged to be a problem; that although local delivery units for the new Ambulance Service were envisaged this was ultimately a decision for the Trust Board but that the positive recommendation would be that such Units be provided; that public health was recognised as one of many of the issues to be faced by the Primary Care Trust and as such it would receive due recognition and that these latest set of proposals were part of an ever changing system to meet changes in circumstances and methods of delivering services and were needed because of this.

Arising from the questions and comments made, Mr Coneys was thanked for the presentation given.

RESOLVED

That, as the date for receipt of a response from the Committee was after the date of the next meeting of the Committee, the Chairman and Vice Chairman, in consultation with the appropriate officers, be authorised to formulate a response to the consultations on Primary Care Trust merges, Strategic Health Authority merges and Ambulance Service merges on behalf of the Committee for submission prior to the end of the consultation period.

43. DUDLEY GROUP OF HOSPITALS SERVICE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Chief Executive of Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust was submitted on the Dudley Group of Hospitals Service Development Strategy and considered in conjunction with a presentation given on the future development of Dudley Group of Hospitals, as part of their application to become a Foundation Trust.

Les Williams, Director of Corporate Developments of the Trust, gave a presentation on this matter, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting together with a document entitled Vision, Values and Strategic Goals.

As part of the presentation given reference was made to the services offered by the Trust, their current performance, the effect of achieving Foundation Trust status, the strategic goals of the Trust and impacts on a range of services and the proposed governance arrangements involving a Council of Governors comprising elected and appointed persons from the Dudley Borough area, 15 from 5 constituencies, together with one person each from Tipton, Rowley Regis, Wyre Forest and South Staffs and staff and partnership appointees. It was noted that elected representatives had to be the majority on the Council of Governors.

The formal public consultation period would be from 27th February to 21st May, 2006 and representatives of the Trust could, should the Committee so wish, report back on the results of the consultation held.

Arising from the presentation given, members asked a number of questions and made comments relating in particular to the position regarding an encapsulation ward and car parking at Russells Hall, the current position on these matters being reported on; issues relating to the commissioning and provision of services, the view of the Trust being that it had additional capacity for commissioners; the proposals to develop specialist services currently only available elsewhere and a request for further details in respect of the constitution of the Trust. In response to this latter point, it was stated that the constitution was not part of the consultation arrangements and was continually being developed. It was agreed that further information be provided to the Committee on the governance arrangements of the Trust, in due course.

At the conclusion of questions and comments, Mr Williams and Mr Edwards, Chairmen of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, were thanked for the presentation and responses given to questions and comments made.

44. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2006/07

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Director of Finance was submitted on the proposed Revenue Budget and Capital Tax for 2006/07

Arising from consideration of the content of the report with particular reference to comments made regarding Children's Services and Out of Borough Placements, it was

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet's Budget proposals for 2006/07 be noted.

45. CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council procedure rule 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That Agenda item 9 – Update of Performance on BV163 and PAF Indicator C23 – the number of looked after children adopted – be considered as the next item of business.

46. UPDATE OF PERFORMANCE ON BV163 AND PAF INDICATOR C23 – THE NUMBER OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ADOPTED

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on an update on performance on BV163 and PAF Indicator C23 – the number of looked after children adopted - in response to a request received from the Deputy Leader of the Council that consideration be given to this matter by the Committee.

The Assistant Director Children's Social Care commented on the content of the report submitted and referred in particular to the factors influencing the indicator and the actions taken to address performance since the matter had first been raised by the member indicated.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on an update on performance on BV163 and PAF Indicator C23 – the number of looked after children adopted, be noted and that the improvement actions both taken and proposed be supported.

47. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the performance of the Council in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee for the second quarter of 2005/06.

During consideration of this matter it was noted that the Assistant Director Children's Social Care was proposing to trial an approval process in respect of adopters and carers currently in place in only two other areas of the country and it was agreed that this approach be endorsed by the Committee and that a report be submitted by her to a future meeting of the Committee on the results of the trial undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the performance of the Council in relation to the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee for the second quarter of 2005/06, be noted.

48. UPDATE ON REVIEWS

The Scrutiny Officer reported, in respect of the Maternity Review that Dudley Group of Hospitals had considered the review report and had set out an action plan, copies of which had been forwarded to members of the Committee. The recommendations made would continue to be monitored and further progress would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman considered that the Dudley Group of Hospitals should be congratulated on their positive approach to the review report and that everyone involved in the production of the report should similarly be congratulated.

Regarding the Wheelchair Services Review, it was reported that the collection of evidence was nearing completion and that it was hoped to produce a draft report for consideration at the March meeting of the Committee.

Reference was then made to the commencement of a Quality and Perceptions of Quality Review in that an e-Reference Group (project team) had been formed of health, social care and voluntary sector professionals to help design and implement the review. A first draft scoping report had been prepared, a copy of which was tabled at this meeting, and was currently being considered by the e-Reference Group.

As it was agreed that a Project Board comprising members of this Committee should be formed in respect of this review the Scrutiny Officer would be contacting all members of the Committee with a view to arranging for three members to form the Project Board.

RESOLVED

That the information reported at the meeting on the current position regarding the reviews indicated, be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN