

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor Christopher Buckmaster (*Chairman*)
Councillor Robert Freeman
Councillor Dr Iain Hanham
Councillor Pat Healy
Councillor Bob Mingay
Councillor Matthew Palmer
Councillor Will Pascall
Councillor Paul Warrick

Others in Attendance

Councillor Julie Mills
Stella Baillie (Head of Adult Social Care)
Clair Bantin (Scrutiny Manager)
Henry Bewley (Health Policy Officer)
Jean Daintith (Executive Director, Housing, Health and Adult Social Care)
Robyn Doran (Director of Operations, Central and N.W. London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL NHS Foundation Trust))
Roger Dunn (Smart Thinking Action Group)
Patricia Gani (Kensington and Chelsea LINK Management Group)
Tony Grewal (Secretary, Londonwide Local Medical Committees)
Natalie Fox (Service Director, Older Adults' Services, CNWL NHS Foundation Trust)
Kath Lowery (Business Manager, CNWL NHS Foundation Trust)
Paul Morse (Director of Environmental Health)
Paula Murphy (Co-ordinator, Kensington and Chelsea LINK)
Antony Sykes (Kensington and Chelsea LINK)
Martin Waddington (Head of Policy and Performance, HHASC)
Gavin Wilson (Governance Administrator)
Patricia Wright (Chief Executive, NHS Kensington and Chelsea)

A1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Condon-Simmonds, and T. Buxton.

A2 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Freeman declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of the Central and N.W. London NHS Foundation Trust.

A3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to amendment in appropriate places of "Central and N.W. London Mental Health Foundation Trust" and "CNWLMHFT" to read "Central and N.W. London NHS Foundation Trust" and "CNWLNHSFT" respectively.

A4 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

a) Central and N.W. London NHS Foundation Trust

Further to Minute A4, Cllr Healy said that she had not received an invitation to attend the open-day consultation events at St Charles Hospital, although she would liked to have attended.

Cllr Mills offered to accompany Cllr Healy on a visit to the relevant wards at St Charles Hospital, and was pleased to extend this offer to other Members of the Committee; she would advise in due course regarding a date(s).

b) Piper House

Further to Minute A8, Cllr Healy enquired about Members of the Committee having an opportunity to view the film illustrating life in Piper House.

It was agreed that if the DVD of the film could be copied at a small cost (without breaching copyright), this should be done, and a copy provided to each Member of the Committee. Otherwise, a viewing for Committee Members would be arranged.

Action: Governance Services(G.

Wilson)

Following an enquiry from Cllr Freeman regarding the latest position regarding the consultation on the proposed closure, it was agreed that a copy of the report regarding this matter, to be considered by the Housing, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee at its forthcoming meeting, should be sent to Members of the Committee.

Action: Governance Services(G.

Wilson)

Ms Baillie said that she would also be happy to meet Cllr Freeman to discuss this matter.

A5 KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA'S LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (LINK)

The Chairman welcomed Ms Patricia Gani, Ms Paula Murphy and Mr Antony Sykes to the meeting.

Ms Murphy drew Members' attention to a number of initiatives being pursued currently by the LINK. In particular, she referred to the Dignity Champions for Nutrition project, and research into the experience of mental health service users.

The LINK had also made a number of recommendations to NHS Trusts in response to consultation on their Quality Accounts for 2009/10. These included the need for information to be clear and accessible to members of the public.

Ms Murphy extended an invitation to Members of the Committee to attend a consultation event at the Isaac Newton Centre between 5-7 pm on 12 September on the White Paper, "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS", at which Cllr Buckmaster would be speaking. A report on the outcome of this event would be included in the LINK's report to the Committee's next meeting.

Cllr Buckmaster commented that, after a somewhat faltering start, the LINK was performing very effectively and appeared to be well-positioned to take on enhanced responsibilities when it became a Local HealthWatch under the Government's current proposals.

In response to a question from Cllr Mills, Mr Sykes explained the role of LINKs in holding NHS Trusts to account if the proposals in the White Paper were introduced. Ms Wright pointed out that it would be the responsibility of GP commissioning consortia to formally hold Trusts to account, whilst LINKs would have a role in scrutinising the effectiveness of this process.

Cllr Buckmaster thanked the LINKs' representatives for attending the meeting to present their report and respond to questions.

A6 REDUCTION OF OLDER ADULTS MENTAL HEALTH IN-PATIENTS BEDS FOR KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA AND WESTMINSTER

The Chairman welcomed Ms Robyn Doran, Ms Natalie Fox and Ms Kath Lowery to the meeting.

Ms Doran said that she would be pleased to arrange a visit to Kershaw Ward and the relevant facilities at St Charles Hospital, for Members of the Committee, in maybe two to three weeks' time.

Action: Governance Services(G.

Wilson)

Ms Fox described the consultation process, and the feedback which the Trust had received, with reference to a briefing paper circulated previously to Members of the Committee. She said that service users who had visited the wards at St Charles had generally been impressed by the facilities available. The next step in the consultation process would be for a final proposal to be presented to the Trust Board for decision. It was anticipated that this would be for the reduction from 50 to 31 in bed numbers for older adults, and for the provision of services from one site only (St Charles Hospital).

Cllr Freeman said that in order to understand better the outcomes of the consultation, the Committee needed more information than was contained in the briefing paper. Responding to this point, Ms Fox commented that very little feedback to the consultation had been received. However, the Trust would be pleased to share with the Committee all comments received, and in due course, following the Trust Board's decision, to provide a copy of the consultation response document.

Mr Dunn said that at the previous meeting he had asked Dr Kelly to send him the consultation document, but he had not yet received a copy. Ms Doran apologised for this, and said that a copy would be sent to him.

On behalf of the Committee, Cllr Buckmaster thanked the CNWLNHSFT representatives for attending and for responding to Members' questions.

A7 WHITE PAPER "EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: LIBERATING THE NHS"

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Dr Grewal and Ms Wright to the meeting.

Dr Grewal commented that, under the Government's proposals, the historic presumption that healthcare would be from an NHS provider would no longer pertain. It was his understanding that, in making their commissioning

decisions, GP consortia would be required to make an assessment of the quality and cost of providing the service in question, and he believed that they should insist on the highest standards of surgery and care. The General Medical Council (and other bodies, such as the Royal Colleges) would continue to set appropriate standards in provision and training etc, which providers would have to meet.

Ms Wright commented that the white paper was unclear in relation to the practical implications of achieving wide public choice of healthcare provision. She considered that, in practice, the increase in patients' choice might well be marginal, and she questioned, based on experience to date, how many private companies would be able to meet the standards required, or wish to act as healthcare providers.

Cllr Healy said that she considered the proposals to "shake-up" the NHS, which involved abolition of PCTs, and the creation of up to 500 GP consortia, likely to cause chaos within the health service, and to increase, rather than decrease, costs. Her perception was that there was very little enthusiasm on the part of GPs for their new intended role of fund-holding service commissioners. She also considered that it would be more sensible to have at least three, rather than one, GP consortia to serve the Royal Borough. Responding to this latter point, Cllr Buckmaster drew attention to the potential difficulties which small consortia might face in dealing with large providers.

In response to an enquiry from Cllr Warrick, Ms Wright advised that there were no proposals in the white paper for 'top-up' proposals, which would allow patients to, in effect, pay a premium for an enhanced service.

Expressing a personal view, Dr Grewal said that he would be pleased to see councillors represented on GP consortia, pointing out that details of how consortia should be formed were awaited. He believed that local authority input had a helpful role to play in assisting GP consortia address some of the practical aspects of commissioning. He also said that he expected that what was eventually rolled out was likely to be significantly different from the plans for consortia outlined in the white paper.

Cllr Mingay highlighted some of the practical difficulties (e.g. no medical knowledge, poor standard of English)

which were likely to limit the ability of ordinary people to make informed choices about a preferred healthcare provider.

Cllr Freeman expressed severe reservations about the proposals in the white paper. He considered that they were untested and untried, and that there was no demonstrable enthusiasm on the part of GPs to take over from PCTs the major function of commissioning.

Cllr Buckmaster commented that the white paper had appeared with very little prior consultation, and he believed that there were likely to be some significant changes in the proposals once various practical issues had been taken account of. He welcomed the increased role for local authorities, for example, in the area of public health, and in relation to the proposed health and well-being boards, which would have an important function in joining up commissioning of local NHS services, social care, and health improvement, although how they would function was not yet clear. He was, however, extremely sceptical about the level of savings anticipated as a result of implementing the white paper proposals, particularly over the course of the initial two years. Commenting on points made earlier in the discussion, he highlighted the Committee's concerns over the role proposed for the private sector, and the practicalities involved in turning patient choice into a reality.

Cllr Buckmaster referred to a Department of Health consultation paper, "Liberating the NHS: Local Democratic Legitimacy in Health", which built on the proposals in the white paper. This appeared to contain some contradictory statements to the sentiments expressed in the white paper, regarding the continued importance of the health scrutiny role in local authorities. In view of this, suitable additional comments would be incorporated in the proposed response to the white paper. Cllr Buckmaster asked that if Members of the Committee had any additional comments to make in respect of the proposed response, these should be sent to him as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That the consultation response to the white paper be approved, subject to the inclusion of suitable additional material to reflect the importance of the continuing role of health scrutiny, in the light of proposals in "Local Democratic Legitimacy in Health".

A8 CABINET MEMBER REPORT ON CURRENT ISSUES

Further to paragraph 2.2 of the report, Cllr Palmer referred to concerns regarding whether the "Shout" Healthy Living Project was affected by funding cuts. Ms Wright asked Cllr Palmer to provide her with full details of this matter, so that it could be clarified.

Action: Cllr

Palmer

A9 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE REMITS OF THE HEALTH, AND HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Committee noted that the proposed change to Scrutiny Committee remits was in the context of the convergence of health and adult social care agenda in recent years, and the sense in this being reflected formally in committee terms of reference.

Cllr Healy commented that the proposals were to be welcomed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee express its agreement with the proposed changes to its remit.

A10 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Committee took the view that the following three potential topics were suitable for in-depth scrutiny during 2010/11: alcoholism and older people; the development of St Charles Polyclinic; and the provision of healthcare at home for older people (jointly with the Housing, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee).

In view of the 'merger' proposals affecting the Committee and the Housing, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, it was considered that it would be helpful for the latter committee to be advised of the three proposed topics.

Action: Governance Services(Gavin

Wilson)

A11 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Cllr Buckmaster referred to the helpful response from the PCT to the Committee's "Priorities for Health" review of NHS Kensington and Chelsea's priorities in the context of the current financial climate. He also reported that Dr

Grewal had indicated that the LMC was likely to respond with further comments on the scrutiny report.

Regarding the Health Inequalities project, he reported that now that the former chairman of the Health OSC at the 'lead' authority (L.B. Hammersmith and Fulham) who had been the driving force behind the bid for this Centre for Public Scrutiny-backed project, was no longer directly involved, it appeared to have largely lost its momentum, and consequently there had been some scaling back. There was, for example, no longer a need for a Member-level steering group, as had been proposed previously.

On NHS proposals for consultation on a national model of care for paediatric cardiac surgical services, and the location of new services, Cllr Buckmaster said that he was writing on behalf of the Health Scrutiny chairmen of the Royal Borough, L.B. Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster C.C. to the National Specialised Commissioning Team (NSCT), stressing that the suggestion that local authorities might have to form a very large Joint Health OSC to respond to the proposals - possibly even on a national basis - was considered to be fraught with difficulties. He had offered to meet the NSCT to discuss the matter, if that would be helpful.

A12 COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER BUCKMASTER

On the occasion of Cllr Buckmaster's final meeting as Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Freeman expressed his appreciation of the good humour and skill with which he had chaired meetings of the Committee over many years. He also paid tribute to his dedication and hard work in a representative capacity on external health bodies in London. These sentiments were echoed by the other members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.25

pm

Chairman