

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER, 2005 AT 2.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Beddows, J. (Chairman)
Molineux, G.N. (Vice-Chairman)

Alcott, G. Mitchell, C.
Hewitt, S.M. Williams, A.

By Invitation:

Mr. R. Willson – Patient and Public Involvement Forum

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. M.A. Davis, County Councillor Mrs. S. Woodward, Staffordshire County Council Representative, Councillor Mrs. J.A. Johnson, South Staffordshire Council Representative and Mr. J. Bletcher, Cannock Chase Primary Care Trust).

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chairman introduced Moira Dumma of the Strategic Health Authority to Members of the Health Select Committee.

41. Strategic Health Authority

Ms. Moira Dumma explained that Commissioning a Patient Led NHS document has been produced in order that Health Authorities can present a report on the impact of services such as the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Ambulance Service for people in the Cannock Chase District. She explained that there was a requirement to be clear that there is business continuity throughout the process, and a need to deliver all targets by 2008.

Ms. Dumma explained that in policy terms the Commissioning a Patient Led NHS would provide more ability in bringing extra services and income. Currently in the National Health Service (NHS) there is a significant cost of providing acute care in hospitals. She commented that by having a Commissioner who agrees that services are provided by an agreed path the problem of making sure that services such as acute services can be combated and are only used for that specific need.

It was also stated that Commissioning a Patient Led NHS talks about making sure services are delivered to the best standard and part of the role of the Commissioner would be to make sure that services are to the highest standard. The Commissioner would be accountable to the NHS who would make sure they were working correctly.

Ms. Dumma explained that practice based Commissioners would be able to make decisions where their income was spent.

Ms. Dumma explained that with regard to the submission to the Strategic Health Authority one of the targets for the future is for Hospital Trusts to eventually become Foundation Trusts; therefore, the Trusts would no longer belong to the Strategic Health Authority. She explained that potentially there could be fewer PCT's (subject to future consultation).

Further, there is already support in Stoke for two PCT's to merge into one and currently discussions regarding Staffordshire, and it was felt that this would be a great advantage with local focus. If the proposals were to go forward there would only be four PCT's in Shropshire and Staffordshire.

Ms. Dumma explained that the proposals to the Secretary of State would detail the following: -

- Single Strategic Health Authority for the West Midlands
- 3 to 4 PCT's for Shropshire/Staffordshire

She explained that a response from the Secretary of State would be due back by the end of November and would confirm the Department of Health's decision regarding the proposals to go out to consultation.

Ms. Dumma explained that with regard to the Ambulance Service the consultation would need to ensure that the current services delivered to patients were still the same. The proposal is to bring together best practice of the 4 Ambulance Trusts across the West Midlands with a reduction of management costs. She explained that part of the job through consultation is to convince people that the services will stay the same.

Some concern was raised amongst Members that should the Ambulance Service merge then services and standards currently provided would not be sustained.

Councillor Mitchell raised concern with regard to the utilisation of beds and explained that Mid Staffs General Hospitals NHS Trust commented that fewer beds were being used for patients. Ms. Dumma explained that in some areas beds were not utilised.

Councillor Mitchell was concerned that all hospital trusts would be Foundation Trusts by 2005 and asked for confirmation as to what would happen with those Trusts that kept failing. Ms. Dumma explained that with all of the Trusts a Foundation Trust diagnostic test would be applied which would take into consideration areas of overspending and changes to make sure that the Trusts were run well. This would be completed by December 2005.

With regard to the situation with the closure of wards at Cannock Chase Hospital, Mr. Willson, representative from the Patient and Public Involvement Forum reported that he received notification from the local press with regard to the closure of the Lea Hall Ward at Cannock Chase Hospital. He explained that an inspection was carried out by the PPIF and a briefing note will be prepared shortly for Members of the Committee.

Ms. Dumma explained that the formal consultation would last for 3 months, however the proposal was subject to some discussion. She explained that at the end of the consultation period, the information would be reported to the Strategic Health Authority Board then the recommendations would be forwarded to the Secretary of State. She reported that changes to the structures could be implemented as soon as July 2006 but depended on certain issues.

CHAIRMAN