

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 18 April 2017



Subject: Scrutiny of External Organisations – Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee finalise appropriate lines of questioning of Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, in response to the concerns of the Care Quality Commission regarding aspects of inpatient, outpatient and other medical and emergency services Princess Alexandra Hospital.

1. (Director of Governance) As included in the current work programme for the Committee, representatives of Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust will be attending the meeting of the Committee on 6 June 2017 to respond to the concerns of members in respect of aspects of local inpatient, outpatient and other medical and emergency services Princess Alexandra Hospital.
2. The following overarching themes and specific issues relating to such services have previously been identified by the Committee, which have been notified to the Trust as the emphasis for such external scrutiny, in order to ensure that maximum value is derived from this external scrutiny activity:

Strategic Issues

- (a) Details of the Trust's high-level plans for the improvement of the services rated by the Care Quality Commission in its inspection report of October 2016, as 'inadequate';
- (b) Details of the action already taken by the Trust to improve services rated by the Commission as inadequate;
- (c) The sustainability of the service improvements already made by the Trust in response to the findings of the Commission, and of other improvements yet to be implemented;
- (d) The increase of the service capacity of the Trust, particularly in terms of the development proposals contained in the Consultation Draft of the new Local Plan for the Epping Forest District and the new Local Development Plan for Harlow;
- (e) The possible relocation of the Trust's services away from the current Princess Alexandra Hospital site in Harlow, and/or the development of new service facilities on the current hospital site;
- (f) The support provided by Essex County Council for the enhancement of the service capacity of the Trust, particularly with regard to the possible relocation of services from Princess Alexandra Hospital or the development of new service facilities on the current hospital site;
- (g) The support that could be offered by Epping Forest District Council to enhance the service capacity of the Trust;

Operational Issues

- (h) How the Trust intends to address and improve the following matters identified by the Commission:
 - (i) the bed pressure and capacity issues that result in patients being allocated the next available bed rather than being treated on a ward specifically for their condition;
 - (ii) the low levels of staff morale and service pressures within the surgery and emergency departments at Princess Alexandra Hospital;
 - (iii) the apparent 'disconnect' between its executive team and front line staff, to reinforce its aspirational 'family team' culture;
 - (iv) the apparent inconsistent approach to learning from incidents;
 - (v) that processes for the safeguarding of children are not sufficiently robust and that staff attendance at safeguarding training sessions is inconsistent;
 - (vi) that processes for the induction of nursing and medical staff is not consistently completed; and
 - (vii) that its history of cancelled operations that are not rebooked within 28 days, which shows a lack of support for people to have care re-arranged as quickly as possible, is worse than the average for England;
 - (i) Details of the Trust's proposals for improvement in the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly where current difficulties may be arising as a result of budgetary pressures, bureaucracy, or a lack of capacity on the part of staff to manage the recruitment and retention process; and
 - (j) Details of the Trust's current and ongoing initiatives across its services to increase capacity or reduce admissions, through joint working with local stakeholders.
3. The Committee is requested to consider and agree any additional lines of questioning to be raised with Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust at the next meeting. The identification of additional lines of questioning has recently sought from members through the Council Bulletin.
 4. Members are also asked to give direction on the preferred approach of the Committee to the format of such external scrutiny, particularly in terms of the scope of any formal presentation that may be required from the Trust. The Committee should ensure that it identifies clear objectives for any such presentation.
 5. There may be public interest in the Council's scrutiny of local inpatient, outpatient and emergency services and infrastructure and the Committee may therefore wish to identify appropriate proactive publicity to raise awareness of the concerns of members, so as to make the process as meaningful and useful as possible.

Resource Implications:

The recommendations of this report seek to enable scrutiny activity to more effectively meet work programme requirements.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities. Although external organisations are not generally required by legislation to attend before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is hoped that most would be willing to engage constructively with the Council's scrutiny activity when invited to do so.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

The scrutiny of a number of overarching themes and specific issues of local Central Line services and infrastructure were identified by the Committee at its meeting on 19 December 2016.

Background Papers:

None

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.