

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 29 November 2011

Subject: Barts & East London Healthcare Proposed Merger Project

Contact for further information: Councillor D Wixley

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry



Recommendations:

- (1) To note the outcome of the latest meeting on the proposed merger of the three NHS trusts; and**
- (2) That a presentation after the Foundation Trust has been running for a year might be arranged.**

Report:

BARTS & EAST LONDON HEALTHCARE PROPOSED MERGER PROJECT UNITING THE THREE NHS TRUSTS OF BARTS & THE LONDON, NEWHAM, AND WHIPPS CROSS.

1. At the O & S meeting of 18th October 2011 Councillor Chana reported on a meeting that he had attended as our representative concerning the proposed merger of the above trusts. As agreed at our meeting I spoke to Councillor Chana and arranged to attend two further meetings while he was on holiday. Prior to those meetings Councillor Chana attended another meeting on the 20th October 2011 regarding Finance and he will be reporting on that separately.

2. The meetings that I attended were both held on the 3rd November 2011 and entitled "Corporate Workstreams Session" and "Clinical Academic Groups (CAG)" and in total lasted for four hours.

3. I estimated an attendance of approximately ninety for each of these meetings mainly consisting of doctors, admin staff and trade union representatives, although at least two councillors from East London Boroughs were also present.

4. Given the location of the trusts there was particular emphasis on the health issues/problems of East London. However the trusts treat patients from all over the country but the main catchment areas are Waltham Forest, Newham, Tower Hamlets, City of London parts of Redbridge and Hackney. In the Epping Forest area I was advised that roughly speaking the catchment area extends to Nazeing in one direction and Epping in another. Beyond those places patients are likely to be referred to Princess Alexandra at Harlow or Addenbrookes at Cambridge.

5. Agenda items covered by the meetings:

"Corporate Workstreams Session"

Communication and Engagement
Education
Estate and Facilities
Finance
HR/OD (Organisational Development)
Informatics
Procurement
Quality Governance
Research and Development

“Clinical Academic Groups Session (CAG)”

The following services:

Ambulatory
Cancer
Cardiovascular
Children’s
Clinical Support
Emergency Care and Acute medicine (ECAM)
Surgery
Women’s

6. Both meetings were chaired by Stephen O’Brien who is the Chairman of the Barts & London but is also the “Integration Chairman”. There were a number of presentations and discussion sessions and I will list my recollections of the main issues. However this is a complex subject and my list shouldn’t be taken as comprehensive.

7. Driving force behind merger is need by combined trusts to save £237 million over next five years. Merger will help them to do that and also achieve Foundation Trust status (Government requirement for all trusts). Merger will also provide benefits for patients and staff.

8. Closer working will provide opportunities for “best practice” to be established, including improved patient record handling and improved Staff training.

9. Also there was a desire to treat patients at locations nearer to their homes and if possible at home, thereby eliminating the risks of acquired hospital infections. Likewise another objective of shorter hospitalization would have a similar benefit as well as freeing up beds.

10. Emphasis placed on tackling health inequalities in East London where life expectancy can be 17 years shorter than in other areas.

11. Promotion of healthy lifestyles is to be linked to the Olympic legacy.

12. People in employment are healthier and the Trust intends to work with local government and educational establishments with a view to encouraging businesses to set up in East London and wishes to provide training opportunities so that it can itself employ local people (the three trusts currently employ 15,000 people).

13. The population served by the trusts is 1,000,000 and is expected to rise by 100,000 over the next 10 years.

14. A new A & E Unit to be built at Whipps Cross.

15. It will be possible for any individual living in England or Wales to become a member of the proposed Foundation Trust. If any member is interested I can supply details.

16. There are a number of processes to go through before the planned merger date of April 2012. Followed by Foundation Trust application in 2013 and Foundation Trust approval in 2013.

17. Jo Lobban, Communications & Stakeholder Manager of the Merger Project and Mark Graver, Assistant Director of Press & Communications for Whipps Cross were my main points of contact at the meetings and were most helpful. They would be willing to arrange a presentation at a future O & S meeting or to a group of interested councillors. In view of our busy work programme and the fact that the merger is likely to go ahead, I suggested that a presentation after the Foundation Trust has been running for a year might be useful and they would be pleased to arrange that.