

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**REPORT TO HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22nd SEPTEMBER 2011****BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PREVIOUS SCRUTINY OF THE WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE MAKE READY AND ESTATES REVIEW****REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY GROUP SPECIALIST****Background to WMAS Make Ready and Estates Review**

This is an informal briefing note to summarise scrutiny work done during 2010/11 relating to the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) Make Ready and Estates review. The note was written by the Scrutiny Group Specialist who supported the work during 2010/11 and the aim is to bring members of the Health Scrutiny Committee up to date with previous work.

Meeting with Nick Henry (General Manager for West Mercia) 1st November 2010

I arranged an initial meeting with Nick Henry to meet him and introduce myself. The main issue on the Active Lifestyles Scrutiny committee work programme related to the WMAS Foundation Trust application process. I also talked to Nick about the work of the Joint HOSC in the reconfiguration of acute services and the role of the WMAS in addressing concerns about transfer of critically ill patients between PRH and RSH.

During the discussion Nick also talked about the introduction of the Make Ready system and the estates review. It appeared that these were two policies that were linked together.

- Make Ready – to enable paramedics to use their skills most effectively staff would be employed to clean response vehicles and maintain stock etc.
- Estates Review – The WMAS intended to establish a single hub for Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire.

Nick said that this was work in progress at that stage but more information would be available in the New Year. I asked if the WMAS intended to consult on the proposals - Nick responded that this was not considered to be a substantial variation in service – but an operational change. The WMAS was therefore not intending to consult. I said that from my perspective it would be helpful if the members of Telford and Wrekin HOSC could have a briefing on these proposals as it is ultimately the role of the HOSC to determine the level of consultation required. I said I would try to arrange this before Christmas.

Briefing Meeting on the 12th January 2011

Nick was not able to attend the next meeting of the Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Committee on the 1st December 2010 but a separate briefing meeting was held on the 12th January 2011. The meeting was attended by Veronica Fletcher, Joy Francis, Jean Gulliver, Rosemary Chaplin, Clive Mason and Ian Fletcher. (Apologies were received from Karen Blundell and Dag Saunders.)

Nick Henry outlined that the WMAS planned to implement that Make Ready system that has been in operation in Staffordshire for 10 -15 years. The Estates Review will also look to reduce the number of sites managed by the WMAS from 59 across the region to 15 operation bases. The current proposal for the West Mercia region is that there would be a single hub based near Shrewsbury. Ambulance stations would be replaced with Community Response Sites.

All paramedic staff would report to the hub at the start of the shift. The shifts will be staggered throughout the day. The response vehicles and ambulances will move during the day to strategic stand by points to be near the areas where data has shown that the need is greatest. Members were informed that under this system the West Mercia region would have more vehicles to cover the area.

Members questioned why there would not also be a hub in Telford and Wrekin as it is a significant population centre – it was reported that the make ready system would not be viable if there were 2 hubs in the region. The hub would include vehicle maintenance and it would not be viable to set up these facilities in both areas.

Members recognised the benefit of using paramedic time more efficiently but had concerns about reducing the number of ambulance stations and that it was proposed that there would not be an ambulance station in Telford and Wrekin. Members requested further information on the following issues:

- Figures that explain the how the make ready system will increase the availability of ambulances in Telford and Wrekin based on the provision of one hub near Shrewsbury
- Analysis of the current down time resulting from travel to and from the existing stations at the beginning and end of shifts and when a vehicle has to be changed after a job for the Telford and Wrekin area
- How the WMAS will manage the increased travel time to and from work for staff
- The rationale from the WMAS for not consulting on the changes and the decision that this is not a substantial variation in service.

WMAS Board Meeting 26th January 2011

The WMAS Board approved a report on the planning and implementation of the Make Ready Scheme across the region.

Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs' Forum

At the meeting in Dudley on the 27th January 2011. Members received a presentation on the WMAS Foundation Trust application. During the discussion Members asked questions about the introduction of the Make Ready System. An invitation was extended to all HOSC to visit the existing system in Staffordshire.

Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Joint HOSC 24th March

As part of the evidence received during the consultation on the reconfiguration of acute services at PRH and RSH the Joint HOSC received a presentation on the Make Ready system at the meeting held in Shrewsbury on the 11th March 2011. Telford and Wrekin Members requested a response to the issues raised by Members at the briefing meeting on the 12th January.

Response to Issues Raised by Telford and Wrekin Members

The response was received on the 20th April (see below).

Visit to Make Ready system at Staffordshire WMAS

Members of Telford and Wrekin HOSC and the Cabinet Members for Adult Care and Support visited the WMAS make ready centre in Staffordshire at Toll Gate. The visit was hosted by Lee Washington the General Manager for Staffordshire and Martin Minard the Logistics Manager.

It was explained that the make ready system in Staffordshire was established following visits to emergency services in America in Pirella and California. Three key issues were identified that would improve the service in Staffordshire following this visit:

1. The need to develop an emergency control centre with an operations plan
2. Ambulance stations are not needed but response posts are required (In Staffordshire these cost between 1p and £2,000 per year to maintain)
3. Development of superstations (In Staffordshire these are in Stoke on Trent, Stafford and Lichfield).

It was explained that while local communities often feel strongly about ambulance stations – staff and vehicles are not usually there during the day but are in places where there is high demand. When the Make Ready system was implemented in Staffordshire in rural areas where there has been an ambulance station this was replaced by a 24 / 7 paramedic service. The introduction of the Make Ready system also enabled the ambulance service to rationalise the ambulance fleet from 75 to 55. (the target has been increased to 61 ambulances there are currently 59)

The vehicles are checked every shift and all vehicles are stocked to the same standards by Make Ready staff. Vehicles are stocked and cleaned to infection control standards 30 mins before the shift starts. Some of the vehicles are owned by WMAS and some are on lease. Paramedic staff report to the Hub at the beginning of the shift and are allocated a vehicle.

Shifts start at 15 min intervals at 6.00am and then hourly from 8.00 till 5.00. This takes into account that staff located at a distant response point may need to start travelling back to the hub 45 mins before the end of the shift. It was reported that the regular busy periods for the WMAS are 11.00 – 3.00 on Mondays and Fridays. This was a recognized pattern – after the week end people contact their GP and can be advised to contact the WMAS and also on Fridays many patients want to access services before the weekend.

Members were also informed that from April 1st the response standards had changed. In appropriate calls are still an issue for the WMAS. Currently 4% of call are 'triaged out' the aim is to increase this to 8% by December and 12% by June 2012.

The response cars do not come back to the Make Ready hub every day. In rural areas cars may respond to 6- 8 call a week and come to the hub every 2 or 3 days. In urban areas the response rate is higher and cars would go to the hub every day.

The make ready staff deliver a clean vehicle to the paramedic response point or if the paramedic has to bring the vehicle in the control centre will back fill. If a vehicle breaks down the make ready staff will bring out another vehicle so the paramedics can continue to respond to call rather than wait with the vehicle.

The Make Ready system has also helped to develop the planned special operations unit to support major events – e.g. V festival. The service also uses telemedicine – paramedics can use a scan to monitor the heart and send this to a hospital for a medical opinion.

The WMAS in Staffordshire has close links with the and has a well established Community First Responders Team. The service has learned a lot through the implementation of Make Ready – one key element to the success of the scheme was to form teams of 10 staff with had a team leader who would meet on a monthly basis with management to raise issues. Previously the management structure had been through ambulance stations of between 30-70 people. Staff were also able to see the benefits of the changes as savings were re-invested in training and new equipment.

While there are three hubs in Staffordshire currently there are discussions to reduce this to two hubs in the future. It was also reported that there have been no shortage of applications for paramedic staff or make ready staff.

Make Ready System

There is a shift rota for make ready staff – there is 1 make ready staff providing cover 24/7. At Stafford there are 4 bays:

- 2 vehicle maintenance
- 1 make ready
- 1 wash

Crews do not choose vehicles – these are allocated by the make ready staff. Members were informed that there had not been a case where a critical incident had been caused by a mistake made by make ready staff. The make ready staff receive training and observe before starting the job after 3 months. The implementation of the system has also meant that equipment lasts for longer as faults are detected early and preventative maintenance is carried out.

Response from WMAS Re: Make Ready and Estates Review

- Figures that explain the how the make ready system will increase the availability of ambulances in Telford and Wrekin based on the provision of one hub near Shrewsbury.

Currently T&W PCT area has three standby points (two stations and a standby) and the new system will be replaced with four fully facilitated Community Ambulance Stations that can have cars and ambulances. The new hub will enable these points to be covered as part of the plan, giving more flexibility to enhance cover in the area when predicted. In the current arrangements there is less flex in the system to allow for this.

- Analysis of the current down time resulting from travel to and from the existing stations at the beginning and end of shifts and when a vehicle has to be changed after a job for the Telford and Wrekin area

Currently it is not possible to equate the time lost traveling to and from the existing stations as the ambulances are on station or with a patient or available, so no lost time for this. In regards to the lost time this information by station is not currently available in an automated report, it is only available by commissioning cluster. A new report is being created at the moment to cover this. I have completed a manual snapshot for the last 12 months for Donnington and Tweedale stations. The findings are attached and show that over 11 days were lost last year.

- How the WMAS will manage the increased travel time to and from work for staff

This process will be managed very sensitively with staff, we will shortly be setting up work groups for staff to review all the options and look to deal with each persons individual needs. There is a dedicated manager who will be working with staff to bring the changes through with full cooperation of staff.

- The rationale from the WMAS for not consulting on the changes and the decision that this is not a substantial variation in service.

As WMAS is looking to increase cover and improve the service that is required for patients it was felt that there was no need for a consultation. The operating model has remained the same in regards to cars and ambulances, its more that we are being more proactive in the way they are utilized and meeting the rest of the health community needs to deliver care appropriately nearer to patients home, with the aim of right treatment, right place, first time. This is a Department of Health aim. There's no change to service provision – only an enhanced provision within the market towns in particular.

Donnington & Tweedale Stations' lost hours (combined).

	DEFECTIVE EQUIPMENT	DEFECTIVE VEHICLE	REFUELLING	RESTOCKING CLEANING	Grand Total
Apr-10	03:24:00	07:10:16	00:12:03	22:16:10	33:02:29
May-10	03:21:13	08:17:21	00:38:45	03:25:14	15:42:33
Jun-10	04:47:00	13:39:00	00:31:27	02:02:47	21:00:14
Jul-10	05:01:12	05:25:05	00:16:08	06:06:52	16:49:17
Aug-10	01:15:35	03:45:56	00:45:51	03:45:33	09:32:55
Sep-10	04:38:06	21:15:57	02:35:27	08:36:29	37:05:59
Oct-10	04:56:56	08:30:03	01:00:05	10:47:33	25:14:37
Nov-10	05:09:34	08:55:56	00:39:33	11:02:40	25:47:43
Dec-10	04:57:34	17:54:33	01:39:35	05:33:16	30:04:58
Jan-11	09:24:33	09:42:11	00:46:41	07:26:06	27:19:31
Feb-11	01:26:32	08:15:29	02:16:24	07:32:08	19:30:33
Mar-11	02:00:34	11:46:02	01:03:28	04:07:17	18:57:21
Grand Total	50:22:49	124:37:49	12:25:27	92:42:05	280:08:10