

CABINET

**Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 6 April 2017 at 5.00pm at Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way,
Telford**

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 12 APRIL 2017

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2017)

Present: Councillors R A Overton (Vice Chair in the Chair), L D Carter, E A Clare, A R H England, A D McClements, G C W Reynolds, H Rhodes and P R Watling.

Also Present: Councillors A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader).

CB-077 Apologies for Absence

Councillor S Davies

CB-078 Declarations of Interest

None received.

CB-079 Minutes

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-080 Full Accident & Emergency Services at Princess Royal Hospital

Non-Key Decision

Councillor R J Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Health presented the report of the Assistant Director: Health and Wellbeing, which provided details about the Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals Trust (the Trust) Board decision to develop business continuity plans with regard to Accident and Emergency services as a consequence of the current fragility of medical staffing in A&E.

Following an initial review of the options, the Trust had decided that detailed plans should be developed for the suspension of full A&E services overnight at the Princess Royal Hospital (PRH). It was noted that it was expected to take 6 months to develop the continuity plans and that the Trust would only implement these plans should it become necessary. The Trust had indicated that it was possible to step back at any point if their consultant staffing position became more resilient.

The Members noted that the decision had been taken by the Trust as a result of a recent resignation and the Trust being unable to recruit substantively to the advertised A&E consultant posts that meant that from June 2017 the two A&E departments at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH) and PRH would only have 4 substantive A&E consultants with an on-call rota of 1 in 3. It was noted that there are a number of services at PRH that have interdependencies with A&E services – Women & Children's, Head & Neck services and Stroke services. The Trust had described that further work was required to consider and reduce the risks associated with these service interdependencies. A quality impact assessment needed to be completed.

The Deputy Leader stated that the decision by the Trust was of grave concern, in particular that the decision had been taken in relation to A&E services at PRH rather than A&E services at the RSH. He noted that residents of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin would see this proposal as an attack on PRH. It was highlighted that the Council's PRH4Me campaign, which was launched just over a year ago, had enabled the public to share more than 530 stories of support for PRH and the campaign would shortly reach 30,000 pledges. Arrangements were being made to present these at Westminster. Given the strength of public feeling a public rally had also been arranged for Sunday, 23rd April.

It was noted that the Leader and Deputy Leader had made representations nationally and locally regarding this decision. The Leader and Deputy Leader had written to the Secretary of State on the 30th March 2017 seeking his urgent intervention to secure additional consultant staff. The Leader had also previously written twice, with the Leader of Shropshire Council, to the Secretary of State seeking his support to maintain the current A&E services until the long term decisions with regard to hospital reconfiguration were taken.

Councillor Bill Tomlinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrat/ Independent Group agreed that the measures being considered by the Trust were hard to believe particularly as it was broadly understood that full emergency services were essential for the existing Women's and Children's Unit which was located at PRH. He stated that it would therefore seem necessary for A&E services to remain open at PRH rather than the RSH site.

Councillor Andrew Eade, Leader of the Opposition Group expressed his disappointment at the number of pledges achieved through the PRH4Me campaign. He stated that the funds being spent on arrangement for a march in support of PRH could be better spent by increased engagement with the public through the media to support the campaign and secure a greater number of pledges. He noted that he would be interested to know the costs involved in arranging the march and he questioned the value of a march in terms of the impact it would have on the Trust. He highlighted that the Trust had had significant difficulties in recruiting to A&E consultant posts and he understood that one of the reasons was the limitations of the departments at both sites

in terms of size and therefore career development for clinicians. He stated that with this in mind, the campaign for PRH should be centred on the Women's and Children's unit; there was a clear clinical need in Telford & Wrekin for the unit due to population increase and expansion and therefore, if emergency services were essential to support the Women's and Children's Unit, it was the cheaper option for A&E to remain open at PRH and close at RSH.

The Members noted that the case had been made in the late 1970's and early 1980's for a District General Hospital in Telford & Wrekin based on growth and development, therefore this argument was still viable with the continued growth in the economy and population. It was noted that Telford & Wrekin was acknowledged as the growth point of the West Midlands; the new Defence Fulfilment Centre at Donnington was a good example of this growth and expansion.

It was noted that the current position faced by the Trust was not an isolated regional issue, it was a national position that Members were mindful of and central Government's role and responsibility would continue to be highlighted. The NHS was facing cuts of £22 billion by 2020 which had to be met through efficiencies and often Hospital Trusts were taking short term measures, such as cuts to bursaries and training, which resulted in staff and skills shortages. It was for central Government to intervene in such a crisis and that is why calling on the Secretary of State was of paramount importance; not only with clear statements of unity from the Council but to assert that promises made at election time were upheld.

It was noted that pledges and demonstrations were an effective means for the public to make a statement. Telford & Wrekin was a vibrant area for young people, families and older people. A fully functioning hospital was essential to attract and support growth in the economy and population of Telford & Wrekin.

The Members expressed concerns about the considerable funding of the Future Fit Programme to date when there was still no clarity about the reconfiguration of the hospital services. It was noted that in December 2016, the Future Fit programme Board made a recommendation to the Joint CCG Committee to go out to consultation with a preferred option to locate the single specialist Emergency Care centre for the area in Shrewsbury together with the Women and Children's Unit. However following concerns raised by the Council, the Joint CCG Committee did not back the recommendation and asked for an independent review to be undertaken of the appraisal processes. Telford & Wrekin Council had identified potential flaws in the process and had sought an independent review. The Cabinet Office Gateway Review subsequently also called for an independent review of the process.

It was noted that the Future Fit Board was currently commissioning this review before any further recommendation to the Joint CCG Committee, made up of both Telford &

Wrekin and Shropshire CCGs and three independent voting members. The next steps would be determined based on the findings of the independent review.

RESOLVED -

- a. that the report and the Cabinet’s response to Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals NHS Trust’s need to develop business continuity plans for their A&E services, be noted;**
- b. to note the PRH4Me campaign will shortly reach 30,000 pledges and a public rally is to take place on the 23rd April;**
- c. to note that the Future Fit Board are commissioning an independent review of the appraisal processes that have been undertaken in order to make a recommendation on a preferred option for hospital reconfiguration.**

The meeting ended at 5.34pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning
Date: 12th April 2017

Signed:

Date: