

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Committee
13 October 2020
(11:00-12:00)

Meeting held by video conference call

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman
Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary
Bev Markham, Community Support Officer
Carole Howard, Office Administrator

Carol Dennis, Jenny Gregory, Dawn Ladbrook and Val Perry, Members

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all participants to the video conference. An apology was received for the absence of Di Old.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 15 September 2020

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them in due course.

4 Finance report

The report for September was presented. There were no financial matters to which attention needed to be drawn. The average monthly expenditure this month for the year to date was £8,821, still well below the five-yearly average, and the actual spend in September had been £9,426, which was also below the average monthly spend since 2013. A total of £823 had been spent in the year to date in dealing with the consequences of Covid-19.

5 Improving the reach of Healthwatch Havering

Further to the Committee's decision in July to improve the website, advice had now been received about its shortcomings and how they could be overcome. Discussion had also taken place with Healthwatch England about a new

website package they were rolling out to local Healthwatch to replace the existing website format. Having considered that advice, the Executive Team had concluded that the best way forward would be to move to the new package, hosted by HWE.

The advice on the existing website had cost £360; it was now noted that becoming part of the HWE programme would cost about £100. In addition, there would be a monthly subscription cost of £36, offset against the cost of the current website and its maintenance, estimated as about £38 – so in the long run the new package should prove less costly.

There would be a cost in reviewing the existing website to decide what content should be migrated to the new website, and what can be dispensed with. It would be necessary to engage some outside assistance, but it was not possible to estimate that cost at this stage. Training for the new package would begin shortly with the aim of the new website being launched at the end of January.

The change from mainly Enter & View-based activity to carrying out surveys continued. Several members were now able to make telephone calls using an app on their mobile phones that operated through the office telephone system. Using this, a survey of dental practices in Havering had recently been carried out, the results of which were being analysed for publication shortly.

The survey of relatives of care home residents had now closed. Three videoconferencing sessions had been held, with four respondents, and 24 responses were received to the online survey. The results were also being analysed for publication. Preparatory work for the survey commissioned by the NEL CCGs from the NEL Healthwatches working together continued and other opportunities for survey work were being explored.

6 Engagement projects

Oral updates were given on the following projects:

- Home Care Services – users' survey – discussions were continuing with the Council about how best to carry out this survey.
- Patients' experiences during the pandemic – the arrangements for this project were still under consideration.
- NEL CCG survey – update – little progress had so far been made with this project but more activity was expected in November.
- Blood testing – update – it was noted that the CCG were aware of the problems being experienced in obtaining blood test appointments. Problems were highlighted with the booking system and cancelled appointments.
- Dental services - telephone survey – it was noted that 27 practices had responded to the survey, of which only four were actively accepting new NHS patients. The CCG (among others, including the MP for Barking) were

interested in the outcome and had asked to be supplied with the report when it was ready.

- Care Homes' handling of Covid-19 – Ms Markham remarked that guidance was still awaited from the government on relatives' access to their loved ones in homes. A GP had now been appointed for each care and District Nursing staff were concentrating on supporting homes. It was hoped that sympathetic arrangements would be made for visits at Christmas time.
- Test and Trace – users' experience – this was a new project under consideration
- Audit of GP websites – this project was being developed.

7 Search for additional director

Consideration of arrangements for replacing Mr Patel continued. Ms Dean and Mr Buckmaster had recently attended a seminar arranged by Havering Volunteer Centre about recruiting trustees for charities. Although the position of director of this company was not the same as being trustee of a charity, there were close parallels and the sort of person likely to be a trustee would also be suitable as a director.

The Committee noted that consideration was now being given as to the best way forward.

8 Changes to emergency care in London

The NHS was expected shortly to announce changes to the way in which people accessed emergency care in London. Rather than going straight to A&E, they would be advised first to contact NHS111, where they would be assessed and pointed in the right direction for treatment. If need be, they would be referred to A&E by appointment, reducing if not eliminating waiting times.

The ability to offer precise appointments at A&E would supplement the existing opportunity for NHS111 to make appointments with GPs and UTCs. This approach was being rolled out across London gradually – it had gone live in South London, would go live in West London by the end of October and in East London, including at Queen's Hospital, by the end of November.

It was noted that people who went direct to A&E without an appointment would still be seen but priority would continue to be given to those needing emergency treatment.

The Committee considered that good publicity would be required to ensure that people were aware of these changes. It was agreed that Healthwatch should assist with that, particularly as there remained many people who were digitally

excluded and might not be best placed to use NHS111. It was also questionable whether the NHS111 system would be able to cope with this change.

9 St George's redevelopment project

The Chairman reported that she had recently attended a meeting of the project team dealing with the St George's redevelopment. Although firm plans had yet to be confirmed, the broad proposals now under consideration would create a significant new facility for that part of the borough. More details would follow when available.

10 Living Streets walks

It was noted that the new Living Streets walks would begin shortly. At least one Healthwatch member was participating in the project.

11 Next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 10 November 2020.

Chairman