

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
10 October 2023
(13.30-15:15)
At Queen's Court

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman
Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary
Paul Rose, Non-Executive Director

Bev Markham, Community Support Officer

Jenny Gregory, Dawn Ladbrook, Di Old and Val Perry, Members

1 Welcome and apologies

All members were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Carol Dennis, Carole Howard and Ron Wright. The Board were sorry to learn that Ms Howard was currently in hospital and sent her best wishes for a speedy recovery.

It was noted that, while Ms Howard was absent, it would not be possible to update individuals' appointments etc centrally.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 19 September 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

4 Finance Report

The report for September was submitted.

The month's spending had been £10,940, bringing the average spend this year to £9,836/month.

At the end of September, the current forecast deficit was £3,298.54; that was the difference between the amount paid or to be paid by the Council and the amounts which were then forecast to be spent up to 31 March next year, disregarding unspent funding for projects carried forward, expected income not yet received and expenditure not yet quantified.

Expenditure for the month included £500 for the BSL Choir video commissioned in connection with the Deaf Services project, and £150 other expenses in connection with the Care Home DES and BHRUT Patient Survey projects.

£16.60 quarterly interest had been received in the savings account and the third quarterly payment from the Council was received early.

The Board noted the bank balances at end of September.

5 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

The Chairman reported that the HPbP was re-considering the applications for funding from the Community Chest programme. Previous applicants had been invited to re-apply.

6 NHS North East London/North East London Health and Care Partnership

The staff restructuring within NHSNEL was having an effect across the North East London region, including among the staff working at Place (borough) level. The staff working at HPbP were currently affected and the outcome was awaited.

7 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old reported that there were concerns about a number of care homes, especially that safeguarding events were not being reported correctly, as many care home staff appeared unaware of the procedures to be followed.

The Board noted that, earlier on the day of the meeting, there had been a meeting with a new leadership team for the CQC in North East London. Following a restructure, the CQC teams were no longer organised on a sector basis but by Place/borough. It was hoped that this contact would lead to renewed effective collaboration between Healthwatch and the CQC.

It was noted that social activities had resumed at the Romford Nursing Centre.

8 Engagement projects – update

- **Services for the Deaf**

- The report has been finalised.

A presentation will be made to the Havering PbP in November.

Formal publication awaits discussion with HPbP as commissioners of the project.

- **Autism and Learning Disabilities**

- The report been finalised.

Formal publication awaits discussion with Havering Adult Social Care as commissioners of the project.

- **BHRUT Patients' Survey**

- This project is finished.

The findings await publication once the report has been considered by BHRUT, who commissioned the project.

- **Long Covid**

- The report has been finalised.

Formal publication awaits discussion with Public Health Havering and North Havering PCN as commissioners of the project. Both organisations are pleased with the outcome of the survey.

An interim presentation of the results of the survey will be given at the Havering PbP Board tomorrow (11 October). The report is being treated as a key component of a revised Health Needs Assessment by Public Health Havering.

- **NHS Dentistry in NEL**

- Following up a similar survey we carried out in 2020, all HW in HEL have agreed to run a survey to ascertain how open to NHS patients are dental practices in NEL. Initial discussion has taken place with NHSNEL, following which the scope of the project may change.

NHSNEL have suggested that it would be better to survey patients' experiences of NHS dentistry rather than just find out which practices are accepting new NHS patients (for which the answer is almost certain to be "very few, if any").

HW Havering will be co-ordinating this survey on behalf of HW NEL.

9 Havering Council – financial issues

The Board noted that Havering Council had recently announced that it was facing financial difficulties following a shortfall in government grant and an inability to raise additional Council Tax revenues.

It was not yet clear whether this situation would have an effect on Healthwatch, although it was known that there was likely to be much lower finance available for voluntary sector activity.

As the position became clearer, there would be further discussion by the Board.

10 Next meeting

The next meeting was due on Tuesday, 14 November 2023 at the office.

_____ Chairman