

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
16 April 2024
(14:00-16:00)
At Queen's Court

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman

Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary (for part of the meeting)

Paul Rose, Non-Executive Director

Ron Wright, Non-Executive Director

Carole Howard, Office Administrator

Carol Dennis, Jenny Gregory, Di Old and Val Perry, Members

1 Welcome and apologies

An apology was received for the absence of Dawn Ladbrook.

The Board welcomed Carol Dennis on her return following illness.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 12 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

4 Finance Report

The Finance Report for March was submitted.

Year-end figures

March was the last month of the financial year 2023/24 so the Report represented the final summary of income and expenditure during the year, subject to review and confirmation by the accountants.

The Board noted the closing amounts in the current and savings accounts at year end.

All outstanding monies due had now been received, albeit that the £5,000 due from NHSNEL had been received after 31 March. The net result was that there was a year-end surplus of about £6,380 on which a Corporation Tax liability would arise.

March figures

There was nothing in the Report to which attention needed to be drawn. It was noted that, in order to simplify the closing of accounts, payments to HMRC and the pension provider in relation to March's salaries were paid at the end of March (normally, they would have been paid at mid-point of the following month).

5 Staff structure changes

The Board noted that two applicants had been interviewed for the new post of Community Support Assistant, and that Jennifer Douglass had been appointed, subject to satisfactory references and a clear DBS check.

6 Health Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committees (HJOSCs)

The Outer North East London (ONEL) HJOSC had been set up in 2003, bringing together representatives of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committees for Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest Councils and representatives of Essex County Council, Brentwood and Epping Forest Councils to discuss issues that affect the broader Outer North East London region rather than individual boroughs and districts. A similar Joint Committee was later set up for the Inner NEL (INEL) region. Both HJOSCs included representatives of the local Healthwatch as full members.

It appeared that the senior management of NHSNEL has recently proposed that the two Joint Committees should be merged so that they have to deal with only one HJOSC. [It was subsequently learned that the proposal had been withdrawn but it remained a possibility that merger would be pursued]

Although the advantages to NHSNEL of having to deal with only one HJOSC were obvious, it is not clear what advantages there would be for the boroughs and districts. It was noted that this issue was due to be discussed at a meeting of the ONEL HJOSC following this Board meeting.

Following discussion, the Board agreed that Healthwatch Havering should support continuance of the existing arrangements.

7 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

There was no report (but see minute 13 following).

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

There was no report.

9 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old reported that the local authority were now making more visits to residential care homes.

The status of the care homes at the Elifar (formerly Lilliputs) complex had not yet changed; it seemed the CQC were not currently pursuing closure of at least one of the units but that remained a possibility.

An inquest was due in May into the death of a resident at Havering Court care home.

10 Engagement projects - update

- **BHRUT Patients' Survey**
 - Publication had been authorised and was being coordinated with Healthwatch B&D and Redbridge.
- **Long COVID**
 - Arrangements for the focus groups were in hand.
- **NHS Dentistry in NEL**
 - This project remained on hold pending a response from NHSNEL.
- **Allied Health Professionals in GP practices (AHPs)**
 - The project had been completed. The written report from NHSNEL, and an indication of the next steps, were awaited.
- **Creative Health Havering**
 - There had been no developments in this project.
- **North East London Research Engagement Network (REN)**
 - The REN survey had been completed and the results were awaited.
- **Enter & View visits**
 - Publication of the reports of the visit to A&E services at Queen's Hospital and of the visit to Queen's Hospital at mealtimes would be

delayed until after the elections for the Mayor of London and the Greater London Assembly, as they were likely to be politically sensitive during the pre-election period.

Preparation of other E&V visits is in hand.

- **Patient Participation Groups (PPG)**

The appointment of the new postholder who would be working on PPGs for NHSNEL was waited. Once the appointee is in place, arrangements would be made to work with the HPbP/NHSNEL, PCNs and individual GP practices to restart PPGs across the borough.

11 **St George's Centre - progress**

The Chairman reported on progress with this project. The current plans were that the GP practice would be the first to move there, consultation with NELFT staff on the move was in hand, the dialysis services and other BHRUT outpatients' services were ready to go in, and the voluntary sector was being offered accommodation (although funding issues might cause delays).

12 **HWE Chairs and Board members' meeting.**

The Chairman reported that she attended quarterly meetings of the Chief Executive of Healthwatch England with Local Healthwatch Chairs and Board members. At a recent meeting, the Chief Executive of HWE had reported the following three "headline" items:

1. HWE had met Royal Mail, along with National Voices, the Patients Association and NHS Providers to ensure NHS letters were given priority.
2. HWE had published its the report "What patients want: a vision for the NHS in 2030"
3. HWE would also be publishing their Business Plan 24-26, with priorities on primary care, with a focus on optometry and possibly audiology, together with women's health and social care.

The HWE CE had also reported on HWE's new shared values as follows:

Equity – working in an inclusive and compassionate way, with a strong link into the communities we serve, and empowering them.

Collaboration - we will build relationships, internally and externally, communicating clearly and co-producing with partners to amplify our influence.

Independence – our agenda will be driven by the public, being a purposeful, critical friend to decision makers.

Truth – having integrity and honesty, speaking truth to power.

Impact – being ambitious about creating change for people and communities, being accountable to them and holding others to account.

This would be the subject of further discussion in the coming weeks.

It was also noted that HWE had reviewed the funding and oversight of local Healthwatch across England and appeared to be promoting to Government the idea that responsibility for this should be transferred from local authorities to HWE (or the CQC).

13 Havering Wellbeing Events (events)

We have recently been invited to join the events discussion, led by the HPbP and including senior staff from the Council, BHRUT, NELFT, LAS, voluntary sector and PPGs. Matters discussed had included:

- **Two events were held recently in both Harold Hill, and Rainham Royals within the Warm Hubs which included: The key thing for the people present was that they were keen to have a chat with someone. It's important to get out from behind tables and engage local people to encourage them to have a chat about their wellbeing. Local people there fed back that they generally had good access to their GPs, however, they did find booking blood tests tricky.**
- **The attendees were primarily from the Warm Hubs, however, there were a few walk ins, including some people who were homeless in the Rainham area, and were very grateful to have a discussion about their health and wellbeing**
- **Proposals to utilise the Council's trailer, and build on the Council's summer programme of events to engage with local people including events at sheltered accommodation**
- **Targeting events to specific communities such as travellers to meet their needs**
- **Mark Newman, Head of Audiology services at BHRUT, was introduced: he is keen to undertake outreach into the community through such events, with a view to addressing the link between deafness, social isolation, and dementia. The group agreed that this was a fantastic initiative and were keen to build on this.**

[Note: The Chairman agreed to contact Mark given that this is one of the key identified issues recommendations in the Healthwatch report, 'Deafness is not a barrier']

- **Promoting initiatives such as NHS health Checks and 'know your numbers', with the group noting that we need to ensure that there are**

strong protocols in place for managing the results of any point of care testing such as blood pressure etc.

- **Cancer signs and symptoms should also be promoted as well as other key wellbeing messages.**
- **The group noted that we can also link the Joy App promotion into this so that Local people become more aware of it, and that they can access this for support (NB it will be several months before this is ready to be launched as the project manager has just started in post). The group also noted it's key to have some printed directories as well for those who prefer this, such as the very useful HOFF directory.**

It was noted that among the agreed actions were that the Chairman should reach out to Mark Newman regarding the recommendations in the Healthwatch Report 'Deafness is not a Barrier' and contact would be made with Keith Lilley, the Patient Participation Group representative about how Healthwatch could support revitalising the PPG movement.

Funding would be a key issue and the Board agreed that Healthwatch could only become involved in this initiative to a limited extent.

14 Other business

- (a) Ms Perry commended North Street Surgery on recent improvements to its telephone system and the accessibility of GPs. She had mentioned to the GP whom she saw her involvement with Healthwatch and that she would be commending him; he was pleased to hear that.
- (b) The Chairman reported that Dr Weaver had recently drawn attention to the aggressive approach of some patients toward practice staff and it was agreed that a note be included in a coming HHFN bulletin about reducing aggression towards staff.
- (c) Ms Dennis reported on her recent positive experience as an inpatient at Queen's Hospital.
- (d) Mr Wright reported that the new Patient Knows Best records system had been implemented at BHRUT to enable patients more easily to book appointments among much else. A Same Day Emergency Centre (SDEC) had also opened at King George Hospital.

15 Next meeting

The next meeting was due on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 at the office.

_____ Chairman