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HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 September 2011

Present:- Councillor D Becket – in the Chair

Councillors Miss Cooper, Mrs Cornes, Mrs Johnson and Loades

358. * **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

359. * **MOVE OF THE A&E DEPARTMENT AND THE FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME**

The following were in attendance as representatives on the UHNS and to provide information and answers to the questions posed in the Scrutiny Brief:

- Fiona Jones – UHNS Deputy Fit for the Future Director
- Dr Richard Hall – A&E Consultant /Lead A&E Moves
- Mr Tony Wilding – Manager A&E Department
- Mrs Ann Barks – Lead Nurse Emergency Care Centre

Presentation by Fiona Jones

The Committee received a presentation from Fiona Jones focusing on the building and geographical elements of the move to the new hospital site. Mrs Jones emphasised the stability of the team that was managing the move as they had been together since 2007 and was the same team that had already successfully carried out the move of the maternity and cancer departments to the new hospital site. One of the main aims of the move was to improve clinical adjacencies and thus avoid having to move patients unnecessarily and over smaller distances, it was also hoped that this would result in a decrease in demand for ambulances. The wards at the new site were also far better with increased spacing between bays, individual rooms and larger, better equipped operating theatres.

The Committee questioned where PFI funding had been used and it was stated that the cancer and maternity wards had been funded through P21 funding but that since then PFI funding had been used. The benefits of PFI funding included the fact that the project could not go over budget.

Members raised some concerns regarding the new catering facilities at the new site and it was confirmed that there were not working kitchens and that the majority of food was made off site. Concerns were also raised regarding food waste and it was agreed that further information be made available regarding this. Councillor Loades stated that had been offered a two day session at the new building to see the catering situation including the disposal of waste.

Concern was raised regarding the number of critical care beds that would be provided at the new site but it was confirmed that there would not be less beds than at present. It was also explained that the term critical care covered three levels of care with three being the most critical. Plans were in place to manage level 2 patients in more established environments with special beds that enabled ventilation without a tube; these beds could be used to treat patients with liver and lung conditions which were thought to be high in the area. By providing the correct care to patients it was hoped that critical care beds could be utilised only where needed. **The Committee agreed that it was important for it to monitor this situation.**

The move of the A&E department was still on schedule for March and would be the single biggest move and the most critical element of the project. Mrs Jones stated that there were not any concerns regarding keeping to the timescale but stated the importance of publicity and signage for members of the public who may be visiting both the new and old sites. The new A&E was already nearing completion and testing was now being undertaken, the building would be handed over at the beginning of January.

The Committee requested clarification that signage both on the new site and on the roads leading to the hospital was being taken in to consideration. It was confirmed that this was the case and that work was being undertaken with the County Council Highway Department. Test of the signage on the new site were being carried out with representative groups.

It was confirmed that there was a major incident plan in place which had been devised separately from the planned move with emergency vehicles remaining at the old site and patients being brought to the old site if such an emergency occurred to enable staff to work in familiar surroundings.

The new A&E department would open its doors to ambulances only at 2am on the Wednesday morning with walk in patients being admitted from 8am the same day. Only 2 to 3 ambulances were expected per hour on these days at the times in question. The air ambulance would also move in the morning as it was not operational in the dark at present.

The Committee raised concerns regarding parking at the new site and the provision of public transport to the hospital. It was stated that in the short term it was planned to have the majority of staff parking at the old site to free up parking for visitors but once control of the old buildings was handed over this would no longer be possible. Further options would then have to be considered. **The Committee agreed to monitor the parking situation. The Committee also reiterated its concerns regarding public transport and considered that talks could also be entered into with Staffordshire County Council rather than just with Stoke on Trent City Council which was the case at the moment.**

Presentation by Dr Richard Hall

Dr Hall confirmed that the new A&E department would open its doors for the first time to ambulances at 2am on Wednesday 18 January. Staff were currently in the process of configuring how they worked in order that they would be able to fit as seamlessly as possible into the new department. Training and education were deemed to be of very high importance.

The new A&E building would be ready at the beginning on January and training and staff orientation would take place between January and March.

IT was stated that measures of success would include the use of national quality indicators, post project evaluation by the PFI project, patient feedback and staff feedback.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the number of people presenting to A&E with alcohol problems and questioned what plans would be in place to deal with this. It was stated that there would be an alcohol liaison nurse working towards national government guidelines with the aim of trying to reduce alcoholism. Further concerns arose regarding the presentation of those with mental health issues at the A&E Department and it was confirmed that work was being undertaken regarding this including working with young offenders and the use of the RAID scheme which had proven successful in Birmingham. There was however limited access to mental health evaluation in A&E and work was also being carried out with the ambulance service to ensure that patients could be taken to the best place for them to receive the necessary care. Members considered that the proposed move of mental health services into the community could also have an impact on the A&E department and that links would have to be enabled between the various services.

It was confirmed that the helicopter landing pad at the new department could allow night time landing which the pad at Birmingham could not.

The Chair requested that should any risks or problems materialise then the Committee be informed at an early stage and that this would remove the requirement for regular updates regarding the move.

The Committee discussed that best time to visit the new site of the A&E department and decided to aim for January when the building had been handed over, the visit would also be open to colleagues from the County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: That a visit be arranged for the Committee to visit the new accident and emergency site in January.

**D BECKET
Chair**