



Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 June 2011

Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement

Wards Affected:
ALL

Plans for the future of North West London NHS Hospitals Trust and Ealing Hospital Trust

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 North West London NHS Hospitals Trust and Ealing Hospital Trust have begun working on plans for the future of the two organisations. Both of the trust boards have agreed a Strategic Outline Case for a merger and a series of events are to take place in Brent, Harrow and Ealing over the coming few weeks to begin consulting the public on this issue. Although a formal decision to merge has not yet been taken, this is now being considered as a viable way forward for the two organisations in order to achieve foundation trust status and deliver better quality healthcare.
- 1.2 Officers from North West London NHS Hospitals Trust will be at the committee's meeting to explain what work has happened to date, the process for moving forward with this project and the main factors behind the decision to consider a merger. The committee should seek to clarify the timetable for this work from this point, including consultation with members of the public and also how NWL Hospitals intends to engage the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the coming months.
- 1.3 The report provided by North West London Hospitals sets out the rationale for a potential merger with Ealing Hospital Trust. The report says "both trusts have existing challenges that are only going to increase in the coming years. The reality is both will be faced with reducing levels of income, a need to improve staffing levels to meet new guidelines, a fairly fixed estate infrastructure and costs and so would either have to stop providing services, considerably overspend or risk providing them at less than the optimum standard. This is not a scenario either Trust Board wishes to countenance and hence the pro-active response to explore the merger as a means to secure the highest quality of care for the patients of North West London". The clinical and financial reasons for considering a merger are outlined in full in the report.
- 1.4 There are still several stages that this project needs to go through before decisions are taken on the future of the hospital trusts. One of the important issues from the

scrutiny committee's perspective is consultation with patients, public and other stakeholders. At present the trust is predicting formal public consultation will begin in August 2011 and run for 14 weeks, assuming support for the Outline Business Case which is currently being developed and clinical re-configuration options. Given the importance of this project, it is likely that the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee will want to respond to the consultation and spend time at a future meeting discussing this.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the report from North West London NHS Hospitals Trust on the plans to merge with Ealing Hospital Trust and question officers from the trust on this project.

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