

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 MARCH 2014

POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH

Better Care Together

As Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board I am a member of the Better Care Together (BCT) Programme Board. BCT is a transformational health and social care programme running until 2019. The partnership is made up of all the NHS and local authority bodies in the area, including the three Healthwatch organisations and members of the voluntary and community sector.

The Better Care Together vision is for a local health and social care system that supports people through every stage of life. Seamless health and care pathways are being developed which will:-

- Support children and parents for the very best start in life;
- Help people stay well in mind and body throughout their life;
- Know patients' history and can plan their health needs;
- Care for the most vulnerable and the most frail;
- Have services available when it matters and especially in a crisis;
- Help support patients and their loved ones when life comes to an end;
- Provide faster access, shorter waits and more services out of hospital.

We are still at the beginning of our journey to transform health and social care services and the BCT team has recently undertaken an awareness raising campaign across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to test the proposals before we move to formal consultation later in the year.

All local organisations agree that major changes are needed to ensure that services are of the right quality and capable of meeting the future needs of local communities. The aim is to improve services and people's experience of them by focussing on community-based prevention and care, while at the same time addressing major financial challenges.

Mental Health Services

Members will be aware of the national focus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Through reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, we have been made aware that Leicestershire is experiencing similar problems and pressures to other parts of the country with access to CAMHS services, both in terms of waiting times for outpatient assessment and treatment services along with difficulties in accessing specialist beds locally, regionally and nationally.

As part of the Better Care Together five year plan to transform services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, a working group has recently been established specifically to focus on improvements to CAMHS services, led by our Director of Children and Family Services. Progress with this work will be regularly reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board; we received our first progress report on 12 March.

On 14 March the Government announced additional funding for mental health services which has been confirmed in the Chancellor's budget. The range of funding will total £1.2bn nationally. Officers of the County Council will meet with their counterparts in the NHS to gain a better understanding of the resources being made available to Leicestershire and of any guidance and regulations attached to those resources with a view to reporting back to the Health and Wellbeing Board. I believe the Council will wish to join me in welcoming this additional resource now being made available.

Update on the New Congenital Heart Disease Review

Members will recall that consultation on the national standards for the new congenital heart disease service took place at the end of last year. I'd like to thank the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for engaging with the consultation. In total, NHS England received 459 responses which have now been independently analysed. A lengthy report on the consultation responses has been produced. In summary, views on the standards are broadly positive, with concerns focused on how they will be implemented and whether all the issues have been covered. In light of this, significant changes to the standards are not expected.

The next stage is for NHS England to finalise the standards which involves a complex assurance process. The final decision on the standards is expected in the summer. NHS England will then move into the next stages of the review; commissioning and implementation. It remains the case that, if a service meets the standards, it will be commissioned.

I have been a regular attender of the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre Stakeholder Engagement Group and through this I have been kept up-to-date with the work that UHL is doing to make sure it meets the standards. This includes discussions around the development of a clinical network with Birmingham to create a viable, two-centre, service for the Midlands. UHL is also developing an outline plan for its Children's Hospital on the LRI site, which should be ready by 2018/19. A charitable appeal will be launched and I am sure that all members will join me in supporting it so that we can demonstrate our commitment and desire to retain a children's heart service in Leicester.