

## **Report of Dacorum Representative on Herts. County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for Health in Dacorum Meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

HCC Health Scrutiny Committee meetings were held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

At the October meeting it was decided to have two themes (health budgets and quality of care) for the Health Budget/Francis Report scrutiny of 2016 to give time to ask and answer all questions. The themes are likely to be broad so that any question can be asked. Training will be given to the group chairmen and facilitators to help ensure that answers to questions are concise. Some of the responses to the questions asked at this year's NHS Budgets/Francis scrutiny have still not been received.

There was a report on West Herts. Hospitals Trust (WHHT)'s Care Quality Commission (CQC) investigation. Sally Tucker, WHHT's Deputy Director for Strategy and Corporate Services addressed the Committee. The committee is to set up a topic group that will focus on the problems highlighted by the investigation, scrutinise in depth over 6-9 months and report back to the Committee. The topic group will welcome input from Healthwatch.

From 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015 WHHT had an intensive CQC inspection and unannounced inspections on 1<sup>st</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015. On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015 there was a Quality Summit including representatives from the CQC. Following a summit on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 the report on the inspections was formally published. The Trust rated as inadequate overall. The individual site inspections found Watford and St. Albans to be inadequate and Hemel Hempstead requiring improvement.

WHHT is to be in Special Measures for a maximum of over a year and depending on improvements may come out sooner.

The Trust had been working on improvements since the initial inspection in April 2015.

An Improvement Director Jane Lewington had been appointed. The Trust needed to develop an improvement plan and an oversight group, on which Healthwatch have a seat was formed. It met for the first time on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and will hold WHHT and other health bodies to account for improvements. The Committee welcomed the changes that have happened, highlighting the need for changes to happen quickly and the issues arising from lack of investment in estate at WHHT.

The Committee noted that the key issues for concern were around governance, risk, culture, staffing (especially nursing) estate, environment, buildings and equipment. The positive areas were the caring and compassionate attitude of staff, significant improvements in mortality, outstanding children's services and excellent cleanliness and infection control. The CQC will revisit within 12 months.

Staff were briefed ahead of the CQC report and were being encouraged to make personal pledges. However the significant number of temporary staff could affect engagement. Communication would be an important priority of the topic group to consider.

Staff need further training on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards under Mental Capacity Act and this is being conducted. WHHT is looking at all training.

At the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the Health and Social Care Landscape was discussed. The Committee received a presentation including a video which provided a summary of the health and social care landscape within which the County Council works. Herts. County Council (HCC) and the NHS are looking at co-commissioning where money

can come in locally, with ringfencing and safeguards. With regards to the Better Care Fund, Herts. Has chosen to pool greater funds than are required and therefore has one of the biggest Better Care Funds in the country.

The Government has put the Disabled Facilities Grant into the Better Care Fund, the funding for which is passported to the districts and boroughs. Work is being done with 8 out of the 10 districts and boroughs in the County for HCC to retain some of this money.

Regarding home adaptations and equipment, officers are working to improve the speed of response and ensure that there are sufficient staff and vans. The importance of beginning the assessment of patients when they arrive at hospital rather than ready for discharge was highlighted.

West Herts. Strategic Review was discussed. The importance of prevention was highlighted and there was public support for it. The importance of factors like education, housing, and employment on health and wellbeing was noted, as was the need for more education in schools on health and wellbeing.

Regarding communications and signposting, there are plans to build a community navigator approach.

Regarding acute care, modelling was being carried out on three options:

- New build on a new site
- Redevelopment across Watford and St. Albans
- Redevelopment of Watford

The second and third options are being considered because Watford and St. Albans are currently the sites where the acute services and facilities are located.

Health and wellbeing hubs are planned to be set up across west Hertfordshire including at Hemel Hempstead. The hubs will offer a range of tests and treatments, including x-rays, ultrasound scans, blood tests, physiotherapy, mental health services, minor surgery, rehabilitation, outpatient clinics for children and urgent care services. They will also offer health promotion and preventative services and some GP, pharmacy, optometry and dentistry services. At some hubs there will be some community beds for people needing short stays before returning home.