

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **27th November 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Fit for the Future in West Sussex**

Purpose of report: **To update the Committee on the work of the Joint HOSC established to scrutinise the Fit for the Future proposals in West Sussex.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended to:

- 1. Note the update on Fit for the Future in West Sussex and the status of the Joint HOSC's referral to the Secretary of State for Health.**
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1. Background

1.1 'Fit for the Future' proposals in West Sussex focussed on the pattern of acute hospital services across West Sussex, currently provided at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester, Worthing Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath. The proposals involved either St Richard's or Worthing becoming a Major General Hospital, the other becoming a Local General Hospital (LGH) and the Princess Royal Hospital becoming either a Local General Hospital or Community Hospital. The proposals sat within a context of the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton further developing as a Critical Care Centre and a strategy of further development of services in community settings.

1.2 Following consultation, a new model of care, developed and supported by local clinicians, was added to the PCTs' shortlist, alongside their original options. This new model (known as the LGH+ model) still envisaged some centralisation of more specialist services at one hospital site in West Sussex (either Worthing or Chichester – the Major General Hospital). However, it retained a wider range of services than originally proposed at the two other sites (Local General Hospitals + (LGH+)) including the majority of A&E services, intensive care and acute medical services.

1.3 Because the proposals had the potential to impact on residents in a wide area covering several local authorities, it was necessary to form a Joint HOSC to undertake the detailed scrutiny of the proposals. Cllr Rogers and Cllr Phillips are the East Sussex HOSC representatives with Cllr Tidy as the nominated substitute. The Joint HOSC also includes representatives from West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Surrey, Hampshire and Portsmouth HOSCs. Further details and minutes of the Joint HOSC are available via the HOSC website www.eastsussexhealth.org.

1.4 On 6th May 2008 West Sussex PCT's Board took a decision about their preferred service model. The Board opted for the LGH+ model developed by clinicians. On the 4th June 2008 the West Sussex PCT Board met again to decide on whether Worthing or Chichester would be designated as the Major General Hospital. They decided that Worthing would be the major hospital.

1.5 Following review of the decision by the Joint HOSC, and the PCT reconfirming its decision, the Joint HOSC voted unanimously to refer the PCT's proposals to the Secretary of State on the basis that they are not in the best interests of health services for residents of the affected areas. Detailed evidence was submitted to the Secretary of State, who confirmed that he planned to seek advice from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel and to ask the Panel to undertake an initial assessment to determine whether a full review is necessary.

2. Further developments in West Sussex

2.1 In October 2008 Worthing and Southlands NHS Trust and Royal West Sussex NHS Trust announced that their Boards had agreed in principle to a merger between the two organisations. The Trusts' statement notes that "clinical staff have been looking at ways of working more closely together following the outcome of the PCT's Fit for the Future review" and that "the Trust Boards agreed that a single, strong, centrally managed acute NHS Trust would be the best way to secure sustainable healthcare for the people of West Sussex." The merger would also help the Trusts achieve Foundation Trust status. The Trusts are currently consulting staff and involving stakeholders in the merger plans.

2.2 Shortly after this announcement, West Sussex PCT announced that it would be putting the Fit for the Future decision 'on hold' while the PCT considered the implications of a merged Trust. This affects not only the plans for services at the two Trusts involved in the merger but also the plans for consultant-led maternity services at the Princess Royal Hospital which have also been put on hold.

2.3 Following the PCT's announcement, the Secretary of State wrote to the Joint HOSC to advise that, although the Independent Reconfiguration Panel had recommended that a full review would be needed to address the joint HOSC referral, he had asked the panel not to proceed with the full review in the light of the proposed Trust merger and PCT's suspension of their Fit for the Future decision. His letter (attached at appendix 1) indicates that a review would not take place until a new Trust is in place and the original decision reviewed. As a new Trust would be established from April 2009, this means the plans are unlikely to be reviewed until late spring/early summer 2009.

3. Current status

3.1 These developments mean that the Fit for the Future decision and the joint HOSC's referral to the Secretary of State are currently on hold pending the outcome of the proposals for a merger between the two acute Trusts.

3.2 The Joint HOSC has not scheduled any further meetings at this stage, but will meet again as and when required. This is likely to be after the new Trust is in place (assuming the merger proceeds) and the Fit for the Future decision reviewed. Any new plans or revised decision will need to be presented to the Joint HOSC for consideration at that time.

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