

## **MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS OCTOBER 2015**

I attended MCCs Finance and Health Scrutiny Committees on 1<sup>st</sup> October. As usual, I'm happy for material in my report to be forwarded to other interested parties, with the proviso that it's my interpretation of events and details may not necessarily be completely accurate.

The **FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (FSC)** was led by the acting Chair Cllr Sandra Collins in the absence of normal Chair Cllr Ollerhead. Only 6 out of 11 Committee members attended. Also present were Richard Paver, City Treasurer and Exec members Cllrs Leese and Flanagan. I was the only outside person attending and arrived slightly late, so missed the item on Devolution.

### **Item 6. AGMA Scrutiny arrangements.**

This concerned progress on implementing scrutiny arrangements which will roll over into the new devolved authority. The summary of the written reports (43 pages) was presented in a rather vague style by Susan Ford, Policy Manager GM Integrated Support Team. In questions, Cllr Russell was concerned that AGMA/the new GM leaders should be subject to adequate scrutiny. Cllr Leese responded in rather defensive fashion, stating that the reason this scrutiny (of AGMA presumably) hasn't happened in the past is that the leaders had never been asked (!). He said that Manchester City Council's scrutiny system is different to other GM LAs and contended that there are a lot more scrutiny Committees in MCC. Cllr Davies asked about a more specific GM scrutiny group without eliciting an understandable response.

### **Item 7. Combined Authority/AGMA budgets and budget review mechanism.**

Richard Paver spoke briefly about the written report and pointed out that currently the biggest item in the budget is for transport. He went into some detail about the financial reserves available and made some comments about financial scrutiny arrangements at AGM and the future Combined Authority. Currently the scrutiny function is split between GM LAs – for example Transport scrutiny is done by Bury, Trafford and Wigan representatives. There were no questions from Committee members.

### **Item 8. Draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme for Ethical Procurement Task and Finish Group.**

Cllr Flanagan joined the table for this item. The officer presenting the item said that terms of reference have been agreed and interested parties and practitioners have been invited. RV - interestingly, these include the Centre for Local Economic Studies (CLES). Members will be circulated to indicate their interest in participating in the Group. There was no further discussion. RV note – from the paper report, it seems there will be 4 meetings of this group, currently planned for November, December, January and February, with a report back to the FSC on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016. **(Meetings will be open to the public – I'd be very interested in attending).**

### **Item 9. IT Update.**

Carol Culley, Deputy City Treasurer, introduced this item and explained progress over the last 6 months. Councillors agreed that progress had been good, then used the question session to complain about problems with their iPhones and linked email. Apparently some of them had accepted an upgrade when the ICT department had warned them not to, with the result that they are having problems accessing emails on them. Cllr Davies asked when Council officers working round the City will be equipped with appropriate communication equipment (from November 3<sup>rd</sup>

according to the report). There was some discussion about when the next progress report back to the Committee should occur and what 'milestones' are in the progress plan. Eventually I think they agreed to a full report at the end of October and then further reports as 'milestones' are reached.

**Item 10. Overview Report.**

There was no verbal report. Cllr Connolly welcomed the 30+ page report (mostly in tabular form) and the Chair asked for an update for the end of 2015, then for an annual report from the senior management team (RV: not sure who they are). There were no questions from Committee members.

The meeting finished early at 1120hrs.

The **HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HSC)** was chaired by Cllr James Wilson, usual Chair Cllr Bev Craig being absent. Also in attendance were Cllr Andrews, MCC Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing, and Cllr Midgeley (MCC Mental Health Champion). The agenda items were taken out of order.

**Item 9. Locality Plan – Report of the Strategic Director, Adult Social Services.**

Lorraine Bushell introduced this item, speaking about the draft plan presented to the meeting, dated 28<sup>th</sup> August 2015. She explained that she is responsible for implementing the plan, but is only 3 weeks into her post, and the Plan is a 'work in progress' with further revision likely at the end of October. The aim of the (44-page) Plan is to set out a five year vision for improving health and care outcomes across Manchester. It has 10 'transformation' areas, e.g. Public Health, Primary care, Learning Disability etc. The item went straight to questions. Cllr Swannick said the Committee needs to get to grips with the project because of the risks and the large amount of finance involved, not all of which is currently guaranteed. Cllr Andrews was also concerned with funding and how scrutiny occurs – there was mention of setting up 'milestones' for the HSC to check the Plan against. Cllr Newman was concerned there was a £314 million gap in funding. Ms Bushell responded that it is an ambitious Plan, but it also has to be realistic. She said the current fragmentation of health services is inefficient and the Plan will address this.

Cllr Hitchen was concerned that children's services were excluded from the financial modelling – Ms Bushell admitted this was an anomaly which will be addressed. Cllr Hitchen persisted, saying the Plan mentioned 20,000 children in North Manchester but there was no mention of other areas. Cllr Swannick referred to the 'Devolution Asks' section on page 6 which referred to 'increased flexibilities'. Ms Bushell commented that the Plan is aiming to move away from 'competing' NHS Trusts to more collaborative working. Cllr Swannick was also concerned about the health promotion/acute provision balance in the Plan, i.e. that NHS Trusts would end up with most of the financial savings. Ms Bushell said the issue is how we restructure health provision so the place of care is the patient's home unless absolutely necessary otherwise, so removing people from hospital who do not need to be there.

The Report was noted and the Chair asked for more information on the 'milestones' and financial modelling.

#### **Item 5. GP Access.**

This item was introduced by Dr Ivan Bennett, Clinical Director, Central Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group. His report included information on the demonstrator scheme to give the public more access to GPs and reduce attendance at A and E departments. He reckoned the scheme has reduced A&E admissions by 14%. A cross-Manchester partnership of 3 GP Federations have successfully applied for funding from the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund for a 'Manchester access' scheme.

His colleague, Dr Sohail Munshi, Chair of Manchester Primary Care partnership, spoke about the three federations, covering north, central and south Manchester. The federations have 100% coverage of all the GP practices in the area (unusually) and the scheme has managed to get almost all the practices to use the same IT platform so all practices can provide out of hours patient care with access to patients' GP records. There are now 12 community 'hubs' throughout Manchester and 3 A&E hubs – at North Manchester, MRI and Wythenshawe hospitals. The aim is to redirect patients to the most appropriate location.

Councillors seemed not to be convinced about the report. Cllr Newman raised the issues of loss of walk in centres (WIC), contractual problems setting up the demonstration project and the note in the written report stating A&E savings in Central Manchester were insignificant. He also asked about the reduction in the number of GP practices and how many one or two GP practices remained, why 4 'hubs' are not open yet, and how patients were referred to out of hours treatment 'hubs'. Dr Sohail responded that WICs were not ideal for healthcare. A PR campaign will start next Monday for 6 months to inform patients about the new system. The 4 hubs in south Manchester are not open yet due to Clinical Commissioning Group application process issues – hopefully they will start next month. Dr Bennett added that although there are some surgeries that close for half days in the week, he is hoping to persuade them to stop this (he cannot force them as he does not hold their contracts). He said there are no single handed practices in Central Manchester and can provide figures for other areas.

Cllr Hitchen gave 3 examples from 3 practices within her ward (Miles Platting and Newton Heath) where no practices told patients there was a 'hub' alternative to no appointments being available. Dr Sohail said there are appointments at all hubs in North Manchester, including at Harpurhey, Miles Platting and Ancoats. Cllr Hitchen was concerned there were inadequate transport links for her constituents to reach these. Cllr Newman was also critical of the difficulty of patients getting any appointments at all at some GP practices, which he reckoned was due to the 'gatekeeper' culture of GP receptionists. Dr Bennett said it was important that patients with complaints referred these back to practices, perhaps via their Councillors, so individual problems can be addressed. Cllr Swannick said people were worried about complaining to GPs, so there should be some sort of independent system for monitoring complaints.

There were further discussions about online appointments and iPad 'friend and family' feedback availability at GP surgeries. The Chair suggested an update to the HSC when all the hubs are up and running.

#### **Item 6. Mental Health Services Update.**

Three non-Council people attended the meeting for this item. One of them, Ben Jackson, a Unison representative, opened the discussion with an impassioned plea for a reversal of the 60% cuts in

MH services, which are causing numerous problems in practice, including patients being sent out of the area for treatment to places like Plymouth and Durham.

The Chair asked for a full response to Mr Jackson's written questions to the Executive, copied to HSC members. Craig Harris, Executive Nurse and Director of Infection and Prevention Control etc , agreed to do this. He and Hazel Summers, Interim Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Wellbeing (RV: it's getting as bit W1A here!) spoke about the written report on MH Services in Manchester (RV: a useful document). Mr Harris said that 16% of Manchester's health budget goes on MH services, higher than Trafford, but spend doesn't always correlate with quality of care. An independent report in 2013/14 said that Manchester spends enough money, but not in the right places.

Cllr Joanna Midgeley said that the number of 'out of area' patients has reduced from 39 to 3 in the last months - can this be maintained? Mr Harris said the aim is to get to no patients out of area. She also asked how long waits for treatment are – currently more than 6 months, but MH services have applied for money to help reduce this. Cllr Swannick said the Committee was disappointed about a few reports from the Trust in the past – the current situation, running on a budget deficit, is not sustainable. He hoped that, in future, problems would be brought to the attention of the HSC promptly. Mr Harris responded that the financial 'challenge' which appeared this year is due to Council cuts and PFI schemes in South Manchester among other things.

The Chair summed up by saying the HSC needs more information on how much is spent on MH services, how many patients it covers and what the waiting list is for each service.

#### **Item 7. Health and Wellbeing Update.**

There was no discussion of Part 1 of the written report on health and social care. In discussions of Part 2 of the report, Nick Gomm, Head of Corporate Services, responded to Cllr Newman by saying there is no truth in the rumour that the current 3 CCGs are to be collapsed into one. Cllr Newman also raised the proposal of withdrawal of surgery services from North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH) and asked the for an NHS response to such reports. Mr Gomm said he would arrange for someone from NMGH to attend a future HSC meeting.

#### **Item 8. Overview Report.**

Cllr Swannick asked why the HSC looks at these reports each month when they have no way of following them up. He mentioned one entry in item 3, the table of Care Quality Commission reports on Manchester GP practices, care homes etc. In this, one GP at a practice in Mersey Bank had been rated inadequate on most factors (!). There was only a rather woolly answer on what further action would be taken.

The meeting ran over time and finished at about 1615hrs.

RV notes: This was quite a useful meeting. I was impressed by the health professionals attending (Mr Harris, Drs Bennett and Sohail). They seemed on top of their briefs, unlike meeting attendees at many other Scrutiny Committees, and gave as concise answers as possible. However it seemed they are somewhat frustrated in their objectives by finance and health politics issues. Again, disappointingly, there was almost no mention of Health Promotion in the meeting.

Dick Venes, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.