

REPORT TO: Health Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 22 May 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health and Community

SUBJECT: 'Improving Local Health Services '. Public Consultation on the future location of GP services in Widnes

WARD(S) All Widnes

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To appraise Members of the Board of the proposals put forward for public consultation by Halton Primary Care Trust on the re-configuration of some GP services currently provided in Widnes, in line with the PCT's Widnes Estates Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members note and comment on the consultation document.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton Primary Care Trust has developed an Estates Strategy for Widnes. It is proposed that the options it contains will be subject to public consultation.

3.2 There are 9 Widnes GP practices working from 11 buildings. Approximately 61,000 patients are registered with them.

3.3 There are 6 PCT-owned community centres which provide patient care.

3.4 The Primary Care Trust is reviewing the premises and will consult with patients and the public to decide what changes will be made to improve the buildings that this care is delivered in.

3.5 A range of solutions has been suggested. The changes must be affordable, support delivery of modern, high quality services, improve premises safety and accessibility, be achievable, and must take into account the DoH paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". No change is not an option.

3.6 There is a limited amount of funding available to spend on buildings.

- 3.7 Beaconsfield Road Surgery, Ditton Medical Centre, Highfield Medical Centre, Hale Village branch surgery and Upton Medical Centre premises are not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 3.8 Upton Rocks uses a modular building on a temporary site at Widnes Rugby Union Football club and the PCT cannot afford to move it to the site being developed on Queensbury drive by Peel Holdings developers. The uncertainty of the future location has made it difficult to recruit a GP to the practice.
- 3.9 Beeches practice is looking at adapting its building to accommodate the number of patients registered at the practice.
- 3.10 Appleton Village practice will be moved to a new building that will start to be built in February 2006.
- 3.11 Peelhouse Medical Plaza and West Bank Medical Centre buildings are suitable and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 3.12 Widnes Health Care Resource Centre has been purpose built. Newtown practice and Ditton Medical Centre branch surgery will move into this building. Kingsway and Highfield clinic will also move into this building. The services provided at Halebank Access centre will be reviewed.
- 3.13 The size of the Widnes population is not expected to increase significantly, but there are plans to build more houses in Upton Rocks and North Widnes Development Area.
- 3.14 A significant number of patients live more than a mile from their GP practice.
- 3.15 In some parts of Widnes very few households own a car, while in other parts many households own 1 or more cars.
- 3.16 In future more services will be provided in the community instead of in hospital.
- 3.17 The PCT preferred solution would be for:
- Beaconsfield practice and Upton Rocks practice to move to a new building opposite Fairfield High School (either as separate practices within 1 building or as a merged practice).
 - Hale branch surgery to move to Halebank Methodist Church.
 - Upton Medical centre to remain at its current site.
 - Ditton Medical Centre to move into the Health Care Resource centre.
 - Consider improving Beeches current building.

- Halebank primary Care access centre to move to the Health Care resource Centre.

3.18 The move of the main Beaconsfield Rd surgery to a new site at land adjacent to Fairfield school has been approved by the PCT.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4.1 As these proposals involve significant change to services, it is proposed to carry out a period of public consultation, commencing on 8th May 2006.

4.2 a) A summary document will be posted to all households primarily affected by the proposals. An insert will be included summarising the specific proposals affecting that patient's practice.

b) However as the proposals may have a knock on effect on other practices it is felt that all patients should be given an opportunity to express an opinion.

c) Copies of the summary document and the full Estates Strategy will be available in each practice and other public areas, will be mailed out on request and will also be posted on the PCT's website.

d) A notice in the local press will supplement the distribution of the summary documents.

e) The next stage will be to provide the opportunity for people to respond and to ask questions. The summary document will include a feedback form which will also allow people to make their own suggestions and comments. Drop in sessions will be arranged at each of the affected practices in Widnes. At a designated time and date people will be given an opportunity to meet representatives from the PCT/Practice to raise any questions and pass comment.

f) It is proposed that presentations will be given to the Patient & Public Involvement Forum and to the Health & Community Care Forum.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 To be considered further.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 To be considered further.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The health needs of all Widnes residents will continue to be met.

**8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

8.1 None identified at this stage.