

**REPORT TO:** Health Policy & Performance Board  
**DATE:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People & Economy  
**PORTFOLIO:** Health & Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Windmill Hill - Contracting General Medical Services  
**WARD(S):** Windmill Hill

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This reports sets out the background and options for commissioning a General Practice Service at Windmill Hill from April 2017.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:**

- i) Notes the update on the contracting of General Medical Services at Windmill Hill; and**
- ii) Provides comment on the proposed options.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Windmill Hill Medical Centre is located within the ward of Windmill Hill and has a branch surgery located in Widnes. It was originally two separate practices, one based in Windmill Hill and one in Widnes, both developed as part of the Equitable Access to Primary Medical Care (EAPMC) programme. In 2011/12, due to concerns about the financial viability of continuing to deliver the service at Widnes, it was agreed to reorganise the Widnes service as a branch of the Windmill Hill site. The current contract is held with Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust (LCH) and ends on 31 March 2017. Due to the organisational restructure that is currently being undertaken at LCH, there is no opportunity to extend the contract beyond 2017.

3.2 The practice currently has 2373 registered patients, 1958 from Runcorn and 415 from Widnes. Staffing includes:-

- 1.4 whole time equivalent (wte) salaried GP's;
- 0.4 wte practice nurse;
- 0.8 wte health care assistant;
- wte practice manager; and
- 3.1 wte administration staff.

3.3 The site at Windmill Hill is situated in a portacabin located on part of Windmill Hill

Primary School's playing fields. The planning permission for the site is due to expire in March 2017 and Halton Borough Council has been approached with regards to applying for a temporary extension. A permanent solution to the siting of a GP surgery is closely linked with the Windmill Hill Big Local. The Windmill Hill Community Hub Feasibility study, published in March 2016, recommended that *'The Big local should move forward on the basis of delivery of a combined health, wellbeing and community hub, incorporating a GP Surgery,'* and *'The Big Local should formally invite the Halton CCG to join the Big Local Partnership as a supporting partner with expertise of health.'*

3.4 The health of residents in Windmill Hill is a real concern, with both sexes having some of the lowest life expectancies in the Borough. Incidents of cancer, admission to hospital for alcohol related conditions and the percentage in need of care are again the worst in Halton. Windmill Hill also has more economically inactive residents than any ward in Halton and has the highest proportion of residents classed as long term sick and disabled.

3.5 A needs assessment and options paper was discussed by NHS Halton CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC) in April 2016. The options considered were: commissioning as a branch surgery, procuring a new provider as a stand-alone practice, full list dispersal and dispersal of Widnes patients.

Following discussion it was agreed that a delivery point for general medical services at the Windmill Hill site was still required and that two of the options should be explored further.

#### Option One: Commission as a Branch Surgery

3.6

The service is commissioned on a PMS contract and funded on a per capita basis. There would then be the option for local General Practice providers to be asked to express an interest in providing for the patient list as a branch practice (procurement advice would need to be sought in this respect).

##### Advantages

- Continued service provision at Windmill Hill site with local GP's.
- Allow certainty for patients.
- Greater chance of a sustainable service.
- Potential increase in service provision for patients.
- Development opportunity for local General Practice providers.
- Potential cost savings due to economies of scale.
- Opportunity to explore new model of care and access.
- Alignment with the NHS Halton General Practice Strategy

##### Disadvantages

- May need to offer opportunity wider than to local GP's.

#### Option Two: List Dispersal of Widnes Patients (NB this could sit alongside Option one)

3.7

The 415 Widnes patients are dispersed amongst neighbouring practices, of which

there are a number with open lists.

#### Advantages

- Patients will have a choice of provider.
- Patients will have a GP practice based in Widnes.
- Allow certainty for patients who re-register with their new GP.
- Quickest resolution for Widnes patients.
- Local General Practices will have the opportunity for growth.
- Potential costs savings on estates.
- Aligns with the NHS Halton CCG General Practice Strategy

#### Disadvantages

- Potential impact on all practices in Widnes, depending on where patients are resident.
- Void space in the Widnes UCC.

3.8 It should be noted that nationally there is a move away from single-handed practices on the grounds of sustainability, economies of scale and provision of quality services. Small practices have limited infrastructure to improve access and address variations in quality. They are vulnerable to marginal reductions in income and may have insufficient staff to respond to new clinical, administrative and regulatory demands. The financial viability of such a small practice might also have implications for any procurement and long-term sustainability if procured as a stand-alone practice.

3.9 Before a final decision is taken, the PCCC requested that an Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken and that a patient engagement exercise is also undertaken. Patient engagement commenced with a meeting with Windmill Hill's Patient Participation Group (PPG) on 10 May 2016. This was followed by a questionnaire which was developed in association with the PPG and circulated via the practice, local school and pharmacy, as well as being posted on both the CCG's and Liverpool Community Health's websites.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The commissioning of a quality, safe and effective general medical service at Windmill Hill is critical to ensuring the continued improvement in the health and wellbeing of residents.

#### 5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Commissioning as a branch surgery has the potential to realise cost savings on the delegated primary care budget which could be re-invested into General Practice.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The report will support the priority to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people by focussing on the care provided by a Windmill Hill GP practice.

- 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**  
The report will help to support maintaining a healthy workforce by focussing on the care provided by a Windmill Hill GP practice.
- 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**  
All issues outlined in this report focus directly on this priority
- 6.4 **A Safer Halton**  
None.
- 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**  
None.
- 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**
- 7.1 The risks/opportunities associated with the proposed options were considered by the PCCC. The options selected for further analysis were the ones which the Committee felt offered optimum risk mitigation.
- 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
- 8.1 This is in line with all equality and diversity issues in Halton.
- 9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**
- 9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.