

**Appendix 2:**

**Chair’s Report to HWK Board meeting**

**September 27th 2017**

**A new team and new trustees**

Since the last time the board met in July, there have been a series of significant changes to Kingston Healthwatch (HWK). We give a very warm welcome to our entirely new staff team led by Stephen Bitti our new manager, and it’s fair to say that they have hit the ground running and already made a very useful impression on our local health and social care landscape. HWK has experienced significant churn in the last few months and so the new team being able to bed in quickly has been a real achievement. I am grateful for their enthusiasm to get on with the jobs that needed to be done

At the same time, I am also delighted to welcome three new trustees to the board – William Ostrom, James Waugh and Nike Alesbury. They will bring considerable experience, relevant skills and enthusiasm to the board and will provide much needed support to the existing team of just three current trustees. I shall also be bringing forward an additional name for the board to approve at the meeting. These new additions will significantly increase our capacity as a board both to provide effective leadership to the HWK project as a whole and to promote the health and social care consumer agenda in Kingston.

I speak for all the Trustees, that we would want to place on record our great thanks to Sophie Bird for her significant contribution to HWK over the last two and a half years.  In particular, for holding the fort during the period from April to August this year when single-handedly she maintained our day to day operational work.  We wish her every success at Hounslow CCG.

**Our partnership with Richmond Healthwatch**

It is appropriate here to record here our thanks to Mike Derry the Richmond HW manager who provided active, hands on support to us over a period of 5 months whilst we regrouped after the staff changes in April and as we recruited our new team. His support to the board and Sophie Bird was invaluable. During this period, trustees of HWK and Richmond HW met to discuss possible areas of cooperation and as we go forward it is anticipated that we will agree a number of formal arrangements to cement further our relationship. These are likely in the first instance to relate to the sharing of resources and joint projects.

**Health Scrutiny in Kingston**

Over the summer, as chair, I have met with Councillor Rowena Bass, the new chair of the Kingston Health Overview Panel (HOP) on a number of occasions. It is clear that there is a synergy between the HOP’s scrutiny role and HWK’s consumer ‘watchdog’ function and the outcome of these discussions has been to agree a two-year programme of scrutiny for the HOP across a wide range of health and social care services. These topics have been prompted by wanting to examine the local impact of national policies, taking note of local intelligence about areas of specific community interest and where national bodies are suggesting local scrutiny.

The first key area for consideration at the HOP on October 12th will be the pattern of local GP services. The HOP will also receive regular updates at each meeting about the STP programme as well. The HWK contribution to this scrutiny agenda will be to plan in advance intelligence gathering activities such as Enter and View visits to or surveys about services or establishments that will feature on future agendas. Our consumer focussed reports will feed into the scrutiny process on each occasion. The HOP meets 3 or 4 times a year and comprises ‘back bench’ councillors, offering them the opportunity to scrutinise the work of and executive decisions made by both the local authority and health commissioners and providers.

The two-year agenda will be published at the next HOP meeting, and this provides a significant opportunity for HWK to play a key role in local health scrutiny. In effect we have a number of powers (e.g. Enter and View) which are not available to the elected members and so working together is a welcome initiative. However, as an independent organisation we will have to ensure that we retain our critical friend approach to the local authority as well.

**Our work plan and emerging priorities**

Stephen Bitti has been tasked with developing a practical work plan for the remainder of this financial year and this will be referenced elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting. This will be based on the following themes:

* Bringing forward relevant strategic priorities from the previous year’s plans
* Developing in operational form the key proposals for service development set out in our bid for the HW contact, such as expanding community engagement, developing further our work with children and young people, and enhancing our volunteer capacity to deliver, for example, more Enter and View visits etc.
* Consolidating where we already have some traction in the field of grassroots engagement and monitoring the implementation of the Mental Health Strategy
* Building on the work of the Community Care, Hospital Services and Mental Health Task Groups
* Responding to and monitoring the progress of new national and local developments such as Kingston Coordinated Care, Home Care Commissioning, the STP programme and Choosing Wisely

As part of our successful bid we were asked by the Council to propose a series of performance measures that could be used to hold us to account, demonstrating that the public money spent on HW services is being spent wisely and meeting the funding objectives. The work plan will also reflect these requirements and a conversation with the Council to confirm these measures is planned.

Stephen’s report to this meeting will also spell out the operational progress that has been made since he joined HWK in early August and will provide a flavour of the current breadth of our work.

**Chairing Kingston Healthwatch**

Earlier this year I indicated to my colleague trustees that it was my intention to stand down as Chair of HWK, at an appropriate time, after 4 very interesting, fulfilling and at times challenging years. Partly this was because I felt that after four years it was time for another person to lead the organisation but also because although I retired 4 and half years ago from full time work, the safeguarding work I do for the Methodist Church has now assumed virtually full time proportions. In fact, I started a new 4 days a week job in July whilst I continue to do some freelance work in this field as well.

Being chair of HWK is not, as I quickly found out, ‘just chairing a meeting every couple of months’ as I was told at the outset! We have places on a number of other boards and committees which are imperative to attend and being available during the day to support the staff team is critical. We also receive numerous invitations to go to other meetings, sit on working groups and attend national events. Consequently, I no longer feel I have time to continue in this role and do it full justice and so once the board of trustees have agreed a new chair, with reference to the Articles of Association, I shall aim to affect an orderly handover. I anticipate that this process will be concluded by the time of the next meeting in November. It is however my intention to remain a trustee for the time being and continue as the board member with responsibility for safeguarding.

I am very proud of the fact that earlier this year we secured the contract for HWK to provide Healthwatch Services in Kingston. That was my goal from the beginning. Likewise, I think we have succeeded in establishing HWK as a credible, consistent and appropriately critical consumer champion, and I believe strongly we are in a good place now to continue to make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of health and social care in Kingston.

My particular thanks must go to Liz Meerabeau and Nigel Spalding who have supported me greatly in this role. The have been integral to our success, particularly over the last 18 months. Finally, I wish my successor every good wish in his or her future endeavours.

**Grahame Snelling**

**Chair Healthwatch Kingston**

**September 22nd 2017**