EQUITABLE ACCESS IN PRIMARY CARE - UPDATE

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an update on progress towards implementation of the Equitable Access schemes.

2. PROGRESS REPORT

a. Signing Contracts with the Primary Care Trusts

The discussions regarding the contracts with the Primary Care Trusts are close to being signed and this will be undertaken in advance of 31st March 2009.

b. Premises

Following a tendering exercise, the orders for the purchase of the new modular buildings has been placed. The supplier has indicated that the buildings will be available within 11 weeks of receipt of orders. This will mean that the implementation date is likely to be delayed until the beginning of June and will now largely be determined by the availability of utilities and information systems to allow the building to function.

Planning applications have now been submitted on all three schemes. Planning permission has been received for the Cowgate/Blakelaw Health Centre with decisions on the Battle Hill and Walker schemes expected in the near future.

The negotiations are completed with regard to the acquisition of land in the three locations and the legal transfer process is now underway.

As part of the planning application process, a range of activities are taking place to engage with local communities on our proposals. This includes:-

- A leaflet drop to households in the area, with a pre-paid reply slip to allow people to send in their comments and views
- A number of drop-in sessions in local venues where people can view the plans and building layout and meet with representatives of the partnership to ask questions/raise issues.
- A questionnaire has been devised to encourage people to give views and information about the use of services
- Attendance at Ward Committees and Community Network meetings in the area
- Contacting local Councillors to give information and an invitation to meet with officers to discuss the plans.
There has been a good level of response to this exercise with good attendance at most of the drop-in sessions and meetings. Together with the questionnaire results, a rich amount of feedback and comment has been obtained which is useful in planning the operational aspects of the schemes and future developments. There is significant support for the Health Centres and the GP Practice. In respect of the Walker scheme, there are some concerns from residents who live in the immediate vicinity of the site regarding the implications for parking and security of the building which will be considered by the Planning authority when reaching a decision on the application.

c. Recruitment

Recruitment of GPs, Nurse Practitioners and Practice Manager has been successful and posts are being confirmed with appointees. The recruitment of Radiography staff is underway and adverts for administrative staff will appear within the next two weeks.

An Induction and Training Programme is being devised to ensure staff are aware of all operational policies and to undertake team building to support the teams to work effectively together in the new services.

d. Other issues

Work is underway to develop all policies and procedures to underpin service delivery.

IT Systems will be provided by the PCTs. However, there is a potential for delays to implementation should the network cabling not be in place in time. The timescale for this is being actively pursued by the PCT.

Arrangements for the provision of Facilities Management and other infrastructure services to the joint venture companies are being developed.

3. SUMMARY

The implementation timescale required for the Equitable Access schemes has always been considered to be extremely challenging. Considerable effort and resources being devoted to this programme with the critical enabling measure being the availability of premises and staff. Whilst progress has been encouraging within the tight timescales being faced, there remains potential risk for any of the elements which are outside our control to delay the whole programme.

4. RECOMMENDATION

To receive this update on the progress being made in respect of the implementation of the Equitable Access primary care schemes.

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