

New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group

Tuesday, 19th May, 2009

MEETING OF NEW REGIONAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Attwood (Chairman); and
Councillors M. Browne, Hendron, McKenzie
and Rodgers.

In attendance: Mr. E. Deeny, Head of Corporate Communications;
Mr. J. Walsh, Principal Solicitor; and
Miss L. Hillick, Committee Administrator.

Minutes

Pursuant to the Working Group's decision of 21st April, the Members undertook a study visit to the Royal Maternity Hospital in order to review the facilities thereat.

The Working Group was welcomed to the Royal Jubilee Maternity Service by Ms. R. Clarke, Maternity Services Manager, who thanked the Members for their attendance.

Ms. D. Stockman, Director of Capital Planning, Redevelopment and Estates, gave a presentation for the Working Group and explained that she was responsible for all new build projects at the Belfast Trust. She outlined for the information of the Members the key issues in connection with the establishment of a new Regional Hospital for Women and Children at the site and stated that the Trust aimed to separate child and adult treatment and integrate Paediatric and Maternity Services to operate from one site. She pointed out that the current accommodation utilised by the Royal Jubilee Maternity Service was not of an acceptable standard to deliver an adequate and functional service. She proceeded to outline the design strategy for the new hospital and pointed out that the age range of those children who would be admitted to the proposed new hospital would be increased to a maximum of 16 years. The design of the children's wards would ensure maximum flexibility in bed utilisation and create an increased capacity. She pointed out that it was envisaged that £25 million would be required to clear the site for the hospital and relocate staff. Ms. Stockman then referred to the fact that central government had indicated that funding to clear the site would not be available until 2011 and, should this be the case, the completion of the new hospital would be delayed until 2022.

In response to Members' questions, the Maternity Services Manager stated that the improvements which had been made to current services were short-term and that staff were making the best use of the resources which were currently available. She reported that there had been an increase in the birth rate throughout Northern Ireland since 2002 and that future predictions suggested that that rate would continue to rise.

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Ms. Stockman explained that the Trust had been requested to prepare a business case for the creation of the new hospital. In addition, although the Service's budget had been reduced, staff were expected to deliver the same standard of services as those which had been provided in previous years.

After discussion, the Chairman, on behalf of the Working Group, thanked Ms. Stockman for her presentation and thanked the staff for their commitment and dedication to the provision of Services at the Royal Maternity Hospital.

Chairman