Public Board Meeting, 19 November 2009

Merger of Hertfordshire Primary Care Trusts

Presented by: David McNeil, Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs

Purpose

1. Over the last year the two Boards of NHS East and North Hertfordshire and NHS West Hertfordshire (previously known as East and North Hertfordshire PCT and West Hertfordshire PCT) have been considering a merger.

2. In February 2009, they undertook a survey of key stakeholders and in July at public board meetings, they made a recommendation to start the process of becoming a single primary care trust for Hertfordshire.

3. It is the strategic health authority’s responsibility to ensure that an appropriate period of consultation on the proposed merger is undertaken as set out under The Primary Care Trusts (Consultation on Establishment, Dissolution and Transfer of Staff) Regulations 1999.

4. From the start, the PCTs have shared a single integrated management team working across the two organisations with one chief executive and one set of directors. Many staff work for both organisations although a number of staff also have local geographical responsibilities.

5. The establishment of two PCTs for Hertfordshire came about as a result of a nationally driven process launched in 2005 called Commissioning a Patient Led NHS which also accelerated the drive to introduce universal coverage of practice based commissioning (PBC). Under PBC, groups of GPs practices take on responsibility for commissioning services that meet the health needs of their populations.

Consultation Process

6. The feedback from the independent feasibility study reinforced the view that the proposal to merge the Hertfordshire PCTs is about effective engagement and local responsiveness of the PCTs and its key partners in the community and the NHS. This kind of strategic change should make no difference to the public, most of whom are not aware of the structure of the health service.

Recommendation

7. The full consultation document is attached as appendix A. The Board is asked to discuss and commission written comments on the proposal to merge the PCTs.

David McNeil
Board Secretary