

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

9TH OCTOBER 2013

PRESENT:- Councillors David Kerr (Chairman), Roger Dennison (Vice-Chairman), Mark Bevan, Caroline Jackson, Joan Jackson, Jane Parkinson, Ian Pattison, Pam Pickles and David Whitaker

Also in attendance:-

Councillor Ron Sands
Eddie Sutton – Assistant Chief Executive, Lancashire County Council
Dr Alex Gaw - Clinical Chair, Lancashire North CCG
Andrew Bennett - Chief Officer, Lancashire North CCG
Tim Bennett - Deputy Chief Executive, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay
Sophy Stewart – Head of Engagement for Better Care Together
Emma Foster – Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Dr John Knapp – Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Steve Winterson – Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Barry Forde – B4RN
Steve Edwards – BT

Officers in attendance:-

Andrew Dobson	Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning)
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September, 2013, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Whitaker declared an Interest in respect of Minute 20, Mental Health Inpatient Developments, as he worked for Lancashire County Care Services.

19 LANCASHIRE NORTH CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP - 'BETTER CARE TOGETHER' CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Dr Alex Gaw, Andrew Bennett, Tim Bennett and Sophy Stewart to the meeting.

Dr Alex Gaw gave the Committee an update on the 'Better Care Together' consultation that had been scheduled to take place in Autumn of this year.

It was reported that the timetable for public consultation had been revised as it had to take into account feedback from clinicians and external audiences and there was agreement that a significant range of additional work was required to examine some potential hospital service re-configuration options in a wider whole health and social care system context. In addition technical feasibility work was required around proposed hospital service re-configuration options.

Workstreams such as GPs, district nurses, mental health and out of hours provision had to be taken into account. The programme would now be designed around new pieces of work to develop, appraise and refine options available around both hospital service configuration and an "out of hospital" service programme.

A date had not yet been set for the public consultation at this stage but regular updates would be provided for staff, partners and other stakeholders.

Members asked a number of questions relating to out of hours services, proposals for GPs working longer hours and weekends and the role of Healthwatch.

Resolved :-

- (1) That Dr Alex Gaw, Andrew Bennett, Tim Bennett and Sophy Stewart be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That a further update be provided at a future meeting as previously requested.

20 MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Dr John Knapp, Emma Foster and Steve Winterson from the Lancashire Care Foundation Trust to the meeting.

Emma Foster provided Members with an update on the removal of bed spaces at Altham Meadows. Members were advised that there were currently 40 beds for dementia patients across Lancashire but this was to be reduced to 30 and relocated to one specialised unit in Blackpool. It was noted that 200 people had been admitted over the last year which equated to 1% of sufferers requiring inpatient care for an average of 50 days.

It was noted that the Altham Meadows building itself was not going to be closed and the services already provide there would continue.

To negate the impact of this, support for dementia sufferers was to be increased in the community and early diagnosis was also going to be promoted and encouraged by GPs. The importance of the crisis team was emphasised. It was reported that the team would react to any problems out of hours.

Members were invited to ask questions.

A number of concerns were raised over the removal of the service at Altham Meadows such as out of hours care, the impact on carers with the service moving to Blackpool, the expected projection of increased need, shared care plans and the impact of closures on other areas in Lancashire.

Resolved :

- (1) That Dr John Knapp, Emma Foster and Steve Winterson be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That information on the impact of closures in other areas of Lancashire be provided and circulated to the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.12pm

The meeting was reconvened at 7.21pm

21 RURAL BROADBAND UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Eddie Sutton, Assistant Director Lancashire County Council, Steve Edwards, BT and Barry Forde, B4RN to the meeting.

Steve Edwards began by giving an overview of the work BT was undertaking in Lancashire and nationally. In Lancashire, the County Council, working with BT had a target of providing superfast broadband to 97% of Lancashire reaching over 650,000 homes and businesses. This would be achieved using a mixture of technologies including fibre to the cabinet and fibre to the premises.

It was reported that there was a strong emphasis on business support with £3 million being available for a programme to support businesses in Lancashire. There was also an opportunity for money to be returned to the County Council if certain take-up targets were reached.

With regard to fibre installation, Members were advised that BT were currently working on White Lund Industrial Estate, Caton and Brookhouse. Work would commence in Carnforth shortly.

Barry Forde went on to give a presentation detailing the work B4RN had undertaken to date. It was reported that B4RN has been established as a Community Benefit Society which would see profits in the future ploughed back into the community rather than profiting share holders.

It was noted that B4RN had not received any public funding for the project. The project relied on local people digging trenches for the fibre optic cables to be laid. B4RN was installing fibre to the premises to all properties creating guaranteed superfast broadband speeds of 1GB.

The Committee were shown maps of where B4RN had completed its installation of broadband including Quernmore, Wray, Over Wyresdale and Arkholme where take up was 96%. Work would be commencing in Caton, Tatham and Gressingham shortly.

It was agreed that B4RN would circulate details of the postcodes that were covered by the project.

Eddie Sutton concluded by giving Members an overview of the County Council's involvement in the two broadband projects. The importance of providing the best superfast broadband for the people of Lancashire and empowering local businesses was emphasised.

With regard to the rural villages in the Lancaster district, it was reported that the County Council could not instruct BT to enter these areas at present until the Government had given a ruling on this to Lancashire County Council.

The County Council advised that it was supporting B4RN in applying for funding but it was not yet clear if B4RN was eligible to apply.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions including the concerns brought to light by the recent Select Committee Report on Rural Broadband, the community fund, the pilot scheme, B4RN's funding, the community benefits from B4RN, BT's installation in Caton and a request for maps indicating the hard to reach areas of the district.

The Chairman gave invited guests the opportunity to address the Committee, discuss issues of local concern or answer questions.

It was proposed by Councillor Dennison and seconded by Councillor Parkinson :

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee :

1. Request that BT as soon as possible, produces a clear roll out programme for its superfast broadband in the Lancaster District to enable other providers to work in areas not covered by the BT programme.
2. Request Lancashire County Council to seek immediate permission of BT to provide a clear statement of the terms of their joint agreement.
3. Requests the removal from any future rural broadband contracts with BT that are on a non-disclosure agreement basis to facilitate openness and transparency.
4. Expresses its concern that a large amount of publicly funded infrastructure to facilitate improved rural broadband may be handed over to a single company, without the necessary measures being in place to ensure open and competitive access to other providers. (This may well lead to a rural/urban divide where more remote areas have to pay extra for a single supplier, where urban areas achieve lower costs because of effective competition. This will place these rural areas at a commercial disadvantage and would appear to negate the reason for extending public monies to achieve an equitable and economical level of service.)
5. Expresses its concern that the amount of expenditure by local authorities appears to have risen considerably at a time of severe economic pressure whereas the contributions from BT appear to have fallen. It is also a matter of concern that the costs related to the Northern Ireland programme also provided by BT appear to be considerably cheaper than the costs in mainland UK. Action should be taken by national and local government with BT to address this imbalance.
6. That, once the County Council has received a decision from the Government as to whether BT can enter the areas B4RN has reached, this decision is circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
7. That the County Council in consultation with BT and B4RN provide answers to the written questions submitted.
8. That B4RN circulate details of the postcodes that were covered by the project.

Upon being put to the vote, 6 Members voted in favour of the proposition, 1 voted against and 1 abstained from voting whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved :-

That the actions as set out above be agreed.

22 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR RON SANDS - CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ron Sands to the meeting.

Councillor Sands gave the Committee an overview of his portfolio. The importance of the ongoing re-branding exercise was highlighted to Members. This would see the seaside town of Morecambe and Morecambe Bay being marketed differently from historic Lancaster, as both offered different experiences.

Members asked Councillor Sands a number of questions relating to the Museum's partnership with the County Council, the Lune Valley, issues with toilets and the importance of how discretionary services could be assessed for added value and not lost in budget cuts.

Resolved :-

That Councillor Sands be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

23 CONSIDERATION OF ANY REQUESTS FOR COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action process.

24 CONSIDERATION OF ANY PETITIONS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in the accordance with the Consideration of Petitions process.

25 LOCALITY WORKING

Councillor Whitaker gave the Committee details of the last Three Tier Forum meeting that had taken place in September. The Forum had discussed changing the name and membership of the group.

Resolved :-

That the update be noted.

26 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Democratic Support Officer present the Committee's Work Programme report.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting of the Committee, Members had requested that the County Council's Cabinet Member and the Ward Councillor for Torrisholme be invited to the October meeting to discuss the withdrawal of the bus service on Morecambe Road.

However, since the last meeting, Stagecoach had introduced a new service to address the concerns of local residents which would be in operation on Morecambe Road to Lancaster Bus Station four times daily. Consequently, the concerned residents had advised that they no longer wished the Committee to pursue this issue.

Committee Members were reminded that at the last meeting, the Committee had requested a report on the Impact on the Council of Welfare Reforms. It was agreed that this should be referred to the Budget and Performance Panel to avoid duplication.

Councillor Dennison advised that Cabinet was due to consider the Car Parking Strategy at its meeting in November and suggested it would be useful if this was submitted to the Committee as part of the consultation exercise.

Members were reminded that the annual consideration of Community Safety issues would take place on Wednesday, 6th November 2013.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the Committee notes that no further action was required regarding the bus service on Morecambe Road.
- (2) That the report on the Impact on the Council of Welfare Reforms be referred to the Budget and Performance Panel to avoid duplication.
- (3) That a report be submitted to the Committee as part of the consultation exercise on the Car Parking Strategy to allow the Committee to scrutinise and submit its comments prior to Cabinet making its final decision on the Strategy.
- (4) That the Committee note the date of annual meeting of Community Safety issues to be held on Wednesday, 6th November 2013.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.18 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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