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SOUTHERN AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Forum held on 26 November 2007 at 7.00pm at the Hulland Ward & District Millennium Village Hall

PRESENT

**Derbyshire Dales
District Council**

Councillor Andrew Lewer (in the Chair)

Councillors Ian Bates, Albert Catt, Jennifer Radford and Lewis Rose OBE.

David Wheatcroft (Chief Executive), Phil Colledge (Finance Manager) and Ros Hession (Overview and Community Engagement Officer)

**Derby County Primary
Care Trust**

Simon Griffiths (Deputy Director of Provided Development), Gareth Harry (Head of Commissioning), William Jones (Assistant Director of Commissioning), Tina Sullivan (Matron of St. Oswalds Hospital)

**Derbyshire County
Council**

Ian Stephenson (Strategic Director - Environmental Services), Neil Hickman (Area Manager - North Western Area) and Kay McIntyre (Democratic Services Officer)

**Derbyshire
Constabulary**

Chief Superintendent Roger Flint, Inspector Glynn Bevan and PCSO Jo Dales

**Derbyshire Fire and
Rescue**

Ian Copstick - Area Commander

Members of the Public

Becky Pennyfather (DCC), B Caldicott, BA Caldicott, M Billings, A Taylor (Shirley Parish Council), Ernie Mitchell (Bradley Parish Council), Denise Brown (Ashbourne Town Council), Andrea & Derek Cooke (Ashbourne 50+), Guy Millington (Cubley Parish Council), GJ Sheriff, E Sheriff, JE Potts (Local Resident), FB Potts (Hulland Ward Parish Council), Gareth Butterfield, Mr Whitbread, Wendy Whitbread and Simon Jones (19 in total).

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Councillor Lewer welcomed everyone to the Forum and encouraged their participation.

LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES AND PROPOSALS FOR THE ASHBOURNE HEALTH CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Simon Griffiths gave a presentation titled “You and Your Local Health Service” which outlined the function of Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust (PCT). Details of staffing, finance and services were also included.

Simon then went on to talk about the proposals for the Ashbourne Health Campus Development, progress so far, details of consultation exercises and the next steps to be taken.

He and his colleagues then went on to take questions and comments from the floor and issues raised were as follows: -

- A member of the public commented on how he was impressed with the proposals for the new hospital, but that centralisation of the services may mean extra travelling for some. Dr McCleod’s surgery was currently well placed, but the proposed location would mean further to walk. Simon Griffiths advised that liaison with the Community Transport would take place to address these changes. He observed that the shape of the town was changing and also recognised the need to be aware of accessibility.
- In response to a question from Councillor Bates asking if the x-ray unit would be open 24 hours a day, Tina Sullivan advised that this was still being looked into. Gareth Harry / William Jones went on to point out that value for money must be ensured. The PCT would like to see the x-ray unit used as much as possible, but the number of hours that a radiographer could be employed for, had to be taken into account and further exploration into this was needed. If an x-ray were desperately required, a transfer to another hospital was an option. Tina added that an on call service may be part of the service provision too.
- Councillor Rose asked what would happen to the ‘old’ hospital – presumably it would be sold and the land developed?
- Gareth Harry explained that the plan is for some of the proceeds to be used for equipping the new hospital. The PCT has not yet gone down the line of what the land may be sold for and emphasised that the PCT was not reliant on the sale of the old site to fund the new one.
- Councillor Lewer highlighted apparent inequalities when often people who looked after their health appeared to be penalised because resources are targeted at those who do not look after their health.
- Gareth Harry / William Jones advised that Derby County PCT is striving to balance up service provision and target investment at deprived areas.

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- A member of the public expressed concern about the proposed reduction of beds from 40 to 24 at the new hospital and asked how support mechanisms could be guaranteed?
- Tina Sullivan replied that the PCT wanted to put resources where they are needed for example back in the community to allow people to stay in their own homes – they do not want to be in hospital if avoidable. Resources need to be shifted to meet needs.
- Simon Jones asked what nursing homes and day care centres existed to meet the needs of the ageing population in Ashbourne? Simon Griffiths appreciated that there was a shortage of nursing homes, but emphasised that the intention was not for the new hospital to become a nursing home. Other ways of day care needed to be explored as well.
- Councillor Bates noted that finance was an issue and this may prevent some people taking up places in nursing and care homes. Tina Sullivan clarified that the PCT would like to have the funding and mechanisms in place to enable people to stay in their own homes wherever possible.
- Simon Griffiths recognised that the statutory authorities do need to look at what they are funding.
- Denise Brown added that there was a gap between intermediate care and social services and this was due to problems with recruitment – how did the PCT propose to tackle this gap in recruitment?
- Simon Griffiths was working closely with council colleagues to identify gaps and draw up appropriate plans. He could not speak for council recruitment issues, but as far as the PCT was concerned, the recruitment position was quite ‘healthy’.
- Tina Sullivan added that the recruitment prospects were better than they were a couple of years previous. She appreciated what members of the public were saying and acknowledged that there was still work to be done.
- A member of the public enquired about additional parking provision at the new hospital and Gareth Harry / William Jones replied that about 80 parking spaces were planned at no charge for the time being. He noted that the PCT must take into account the planning authority’s requirements eg for disabled parking and would also work with transport providers such as the Community Transport.
- In response to a comment from a member of the public about staff parking, Simon Griffiths recognised the need to strike a balance between staff and visitor parking. Tina Sullivan added that there are about 40 staff on various shifts and many are local and will walk or car share, but she accepted that parking was often an issue.
- Councillor Lewer commented that there was a strong feeling locally for the new hospital to retain the St Oswalds title.

COUNCIL'S BUDGET – CONSULTATION WITH QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, ASHBOURNE

Councillor Andrew Lewer gave a presentation on an initiative with which he had been involved with pupils from the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Ashbourne on 30th October. The initiative focused on Community, Engagement and Citizenship and involved 60 year 10 pupils giving their ideas on where the Council should spend its

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annual £12.5 million budget and what their priorities for spending would be if they held the purse strings.

A copy of the presentation slides is attached to these notes.

Comments and questions were then taken from the floor and issues raised as follows: -

- In response to a question from a member of the public asking if there were plans to develop this initiative in other schools, Councillor Lewer advised that discussions were taking place with others and that he hoped the exercise could be repeated as consultation and engagement, particularly with youngsters, was high on the Council's agenda.
- David Wheatcroft added that the Council has tried to develop different tactics and techniques to engage and consult, one successful example being the 'Big Brother Diary Room' initiative which had been used in several schools.
- Councillor Radford, in her former role as an Ofsted inspector, had been responsible for inspecting citizenship and had been impressed with the keenness of youngsters and the good ideas that they put forward. She was also keen to be included in any future initiatives.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL PLAN

The District Council's Finance Manager, Phil Colledge, gave a presentation on how the Council was working towards achieving a sustainable financial plan. His presentation included details of: -

- Financial challenges
- Recent service improvements
- Targeted savings
- Employee savings
- Service and other savings
- Shared services

A copy of the presentation slides are attached to these notes. Phil went on to invite questions, comments and suggestions from the floor and issues were raised as follows: -

- A member of the public asked why the Council had been granted £2 million less this year by the government to which Phil Colledge replied that a complex formula was applied to calculate grant levels. Population is taken into account and because the Derbyshire Dales has a relatively small population it is penalised and yet it is a wide geographical area, which presents challenges to resource. Additionally, house prices are, on average, high and this is also a factor taken into account.
- A member of the public noted that some services must be provided (statutory) by the Council and wondered if the government contributed enough to support these services? The government grants about £4 – 4.5 million to the District Council which Phil felt was probably not enough to provide the statutory services and added that the Council spend a lot also on non-statutory services such as leisure.

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- In theory, the Council could close all its leisure centres and public conveniences, as they are non-statutory services, but the Council would not want to do this to this community, commented Councillor Lewer.
- A member of the public acknowledged the Council's difficult position such as in the case of concessionary fares whereby the government make the decision on the scheme, but the local councils must fund them. David Wheatcroft cited a further example where liquor licensing was transferred to local councils, but with no funding to deliver the service, which resulted in a deficit for the Council.
- The Council had also lost out on funding for emergency planning despite setting up reasonable arrangements to deliver a shared, and hence more cost effective, service. Again, David Wheatcroft re-iterated, the District Council is penalised because of the formula applied to the calculation of government grant.
- The Council has to work hard to achieve its £1.5 million imposed savings and David Wheatcroft concluded that the Council would rather have specific grants for specific services.
- Phil Colledge highlighted another unfairness in that the Council must statutorily provide a building control service and yet the government has opened this service up to others for competition.

QUESTION TIME

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor on the responsibilities of the participating partners. Issues were raised as follows: -

PCT Matters

- A member of the public returned to the earlier conversation. There was enough money to fund the building of the new hospital. The proceeds from the sale of the existing St Oswalds would be used for equipment for the new hospital – would this mean that there would be a gap in service whilst the hospital was sold and equipment procured?
- Gareth Harry / William Jones confirmed that there would be a continuous service and that prudent financial management would ensure that things happened smoothly.
- Simon Griffiths added that there would be local involvement in the transition.
- A member of the public asked if the current St Oswalds could be knocked down in the future? Councillor Lewer believed that, in theory, this could happen, but there would be planning constraints.
- David Wheatcroft advised that there could be no overspill allowed and building must be confined to the existing site.

Highways Issues

- Councillor Bates asked if highways regulations would affect what the current St Oswalds hospital site could be used for to which Neil Hickman advised that

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existing use would be taken account of, along with safety factors and whether any new proposed use has any material increase in traffic in which case the County Council would be in a position to recommend refusal. Neil imagined that traffic movements for the new hospital would be different.

- A member of the public raised concerns with the huge amount of traffic on the road of the current hospital site and feared that any re-development in the future would only exacerbate traffic problems. Neil re-iterated that if an increase in traffic was likely, then this would be taken into account and recommendations made accordingly.
- Councillor Lewer added that a by pass would be the ideal solution.
- Guy Millington asked if there was any progress on proposals to straighten the A515 Cubley Bends to which Neil responded that there were no plans within the next financial year. Works would cost in excess of £1 million and, as there had been no serious accidents in recent times, were not a priority, although the state of the road would be carefully monitored.
- A member of the public believed that a traffic survey was to be undertaken in Ashbourne and asked if this had happened? Neil updated that the consultant had started work, albeit later than anticipated so the survey period may have to be extended into 2008 to enable statistics for summer traffic activity to be included.
- Denise Brown asked if there were any 'minor' improvements that would alleviate the traffic gridlock in Ashbourne? Neil hoped that these were the type of solutions that the survey would come up with for example positioning and sequence of traffic lights. The aim would be to make the existing network more efficient and any proposals would be subject to local consultation.
- In response to a member of the public asking if consideration had ever been given to a slip road from Sturston Road to Park Road in Ashbourne, Neil advised that this was the sort of thing that might come out of the survey.
- Concerns were raised about waiting times at traffic lights, which seemed to be longer than they used to be which Neil undertook to discuss with the traffic light engineers as there may be damage to the detectors.
- A member of the public suggested that the speed limit in Hulland Ward is too high and would also like to see the installation of a pedestrian crossing.
- Neil was pleased to report that a 30 (from 40) mph restriction was awaiting approval and that he had also looked at the possibility of a crossing, with the relevant cabinet member, but at the time, was not deemed necessary.
- Mr Potts asked how the introduction of the revised speed limit would be monitored and Neil advised that each scheme has some level of implementation monitoring and may include temporary mobile warning signs. Enforcement would be pursued by the police and local monitoring was also relied upon.
- Wendy Whitbread asked if anything could be done to alleviate the congestion and poor visibility on the main road through Hulland Ward at this very busy location

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(surgery and shop). Neil stated how this showed the dilemma that the highway authority could find itself in – double yellow lines would prevent parking, but could affect local trade and parked cars served as a traffic calming measure. However, Neil undertook to look into the matter with Hlland Ward Parish Council.

- In response to a query from a member of the public as to what constitutes a busy road, Ian Stephenson advised that it is 'relative' within the county which has over 3,500 miles of highway. The County Council is heavily regulated by the Department of Transport in terms of things like pedestrian crossings where certain criteria have to be fulfilled.
- The member of the public, who lived on this busy stretch of road, suffered lorries passing through from 4 am until midnight, it was a very straight road with a lot of elderly people crossing to access the shop – 'an accident waiting to happen'.
- Ian took on board comments made and concluded that the County Council needs to look at desired outcomes and then look at how they go about addressing them.
- A member of the public suggested improvements to the A517 at Bradley and whether 'No U Turn' signs could be installed to prevent vehicles (usually HGVs) turning dangerously. Neil wondered why vehicles would use that area to turn and undertook to talk to the traffic engineers and report back, although he could not promise the signs.

Recycling / Future Forum Topic

- A member of the public would welcome more explanation on plastic recycling by appropriate signage being placed on the bins and also suggested that the recycling officer attends a future Forum.

Light Pollution / Future Forum Topic

- Wendy Whitbread suggested that light pollution, particularly from quarries and related businesses also be considered as a future Forum topic.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Lewer thanked everyone for attending and contribution and advised them of the next Southern Forum Meeting, which would take place on Monday March 17th 2008 at 7pm.

Meeting closed 9.00 pm

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