

Minutes of: **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 6 February 2012

PRESENT: Councillor McInnes (Chair)
Councillors Aldred, L Barnes, Crawforth, Driver, Essex (substituting for Milling), Kenyon, Morris, Oakes, Pilling, Robertson, Stansfield and Steen

Irene Divine (Co-opted Member)
Keith Pilkington (Co-opted Member)

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Warburton, NHS East Lancashire Primary Care Trust
Dr Williams, Rossendale GP
Dr Doherty, Rossendale GP
Phil Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services
Fiona Meechan, Director of Customer and Communities
Liz Sandiford, Head of People and Policy
Andrew Hillel, System Developer ICT
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager
Helen Lockwood (part of the meeting)

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor A Barnes
Councillor Serridge
Councillor Lamb
Councillor Marriott
Councillor Jackson (part of the meeting)

2 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Milling

2. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2011 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

4. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for discussion.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair agreed to deviate from the Procedure for Public Speaking and allow the member of the public to ask questions as the reports were discussed.

A question was asked about whether there would be 24/7 police presence when the Rawtenstall police station closes and if there will be a walk-in facility available for Rawtenstall. The Director of Customer and Communities agreed to look into the issue and respond direct.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed the Committee that as there was a busy agenda she would allow 10 minutes for the presentation on the Urgent Care Provision, following by 15 minutes for questions and answers.

7. PRESENTATION ON URGENT CARE PROVISION FOR ROSSENDALE

The Chair welcomed Sue Warburton, Dr Williams and Dr Doherty to the meeting.

Dr Williams presented information on the urgent care provision and how it was to be provided at different times throughout the valley, indicating that health provision was no longer isolated.

He informed the Committee that not everyone was aware that GP services were available 24/7, although not in every location. The NHS locally were trying to encourage people who have an illness to seek help from their GP/out of hours service.

The new service within the 'hub' would commence 1st April and open 8am-8pm 365 days a year. Appointments were not necessary and the service catered for both children and adults.

Looking at mapping evidence it was apparent that attendance after 8pm was sporadic and low in number.

Dr Williams highlighted the new 111 phone number, which recently became available in Lancashire and would signpost people to right service at the right time. The 999 service would still continue for life threatening situations.

The 111 service was an advice service about where to go for appropriate care. The person on the phone would be able to inform the caller of the most suitable place to go and the length of wait they may potentially have. Self help was also available on the NHS Direct website.

The 111 service would be rolled out nationally and the NHS Direct service would eventually be phased out.

The pharmacy in the 'hub' would be open 9-6pm. This service was provided by an independent contractor and therefore the PCT cannot dictate their opening times. Asda provide a 100 hours pharmacy service. The new provision at the Hub would be staffed by experienced nurse practitioners who would be able to prescribe.

To promote the new Urgent Care Provision in Rossendale, flyers would be delivered in Council Tax bills. There would also be a press release prior to the opening of the service, with a half page ad in the local press and coverage on both Radio Rossendale and Lancashire.

The following questions were raised by Members, which were answered by the PCT representatives:

- What location was used to benchmark comparisons and what mapping process was used, as in the past there had been a lack of information at Oldham/Bury indicating where the person lives.
Dr Williams confirmed that they mainly know where patients are going which is linked to time/attendance etc. There had been an extensive mapping process and they also looked at similar centres.
- If people rang their GP and couldn't get a same day appointment would they then go the centre
Dr Williams confirmed that discussions were ongoing and they may need to alter the way of working so that people can get an appointment at their GP surgery.
- Did the mapping exercise include cross boundary i.e. Rochdale, as most people from Whitworth attend Rochdale?
Sue Warburton confirmed that they had looked at all hospitals and type of hospitals including Fairfield and Pennine Acute
- Would suspected broken bones be dealt with at the Centre?
Dr Williams confirmed that there was always an element of moving on if a fracture had been confirmed. The x-ray department would only be open 8am-5pm due to cost effectiveness and demand for the service
- Would the walk-in centre have access to patient records.
There would be no access to patient records.
- If the centre was staffed by nurse practitioners would they be experienced in the care of injuries and why not use doctors to treat patients?
Dr Williams confirmed that they would not use doctors due to availability and affordability. Doctors would be available but not on-site
- What restrictions were there on what the nurse practitioners could prescribe and what protective measure were in place?

Dr Williams confirmed there are different levels of prescribing.

There were a number of questions in relation to the leaflet and what information had been published on the leaflet.

There was also a comment about taking into account the use of mobiles when dialing the 111 service.

The Chair thanked the three PCT representatives for their presentation.

8. PRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S NEW WEBSITE

The Head of People and Policy and ICT System Developer presented an overview of how the new website would look, indicating that there had been online consultation with those who already use the site.

The following information was provided to members on how the website would be improved:

- Increasing the number of channels to enable people to contact the Council
- Promotion of any key events which would include standard photographs
- Being able to make payments online
- A-Z being refreshed

A number of questions were raised by Members as follows:

- a) Was the payment online facility secure and what type of card would be accepted? – they were looking at what could be paid online
- b) The cost of improving the website – It was confirmed that this was within existing resources but could not be disclosed in the public arena. Liz agreed to share the information with members
- c) Font/screen size - this does meet equality standards
- d) Twitter and Facebook – can Councillors update their information? Liz agreed to look at whether this was possible.
- e) Who checks if someone has 'tweeted' – Liz confirmed that a member of the People and Policy team would go online to check and respond once a day
- f) When the website would be live? – it was confirmed as mid-year

The Chair thanked the Head of People and Policy for the presentation.

9. REVENUE BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2012/13 AND CAPITAL RESOURCES 2012-15 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012-13

The Head of Finance presented the combined reports as above, indicating that this was the first formal meeting with Members and the public to consider the budget for the next 12 months.

The Head of Finance indicated the following:

- The key themes of the reports where:
 - Council Tax rates
 - Councils' net revenue budget
 - Fees & Charges
 - Capital budgets and resources
- The budget represented a continuation of the budget set in the previous year and that future budget challenges have previously been well documented.
- Last year the Council set their strategy for balancing their books over the next 2 years, with 2014/15 and beyond the Council could be facing issues as they would have to find savings in excess of £1M.
- In December 2011, Council approved a 0% increase in Council Tax
- A Government settlement of £4.3m for 2012/13
- The Council is reliant on the transitional reserve established in 2011.
- Since the papers were sent out a further £35,000 has had to be taken out of the transition reserves to balance books for next year for the PCSOs. A decision to fund PCSOs was taken 3 years ago
- Changes to future Local Government Finances, Council Tax benefit and actual support with grants was still unknown
- Capital-side and the ability to raise capital receipts – over the last 12 months there has been a stagnant market with little resources to invest into infrastructure
- Stock Condition Survey – money needs to be spent to keep properties in a fit state - £3m over next 5 years is not affordable
- Grants from Central Government – 2012/13 is the last of the known grant value at £4.3m and is likely to decline further. Districts traditionally are poor relation within the Public Sector and will see the sharpest cuts.
- 2015/16 and 2016/17 is assumed that resources will be the same and we need to start planning now for inevitable changes that this will bring.
- Efficiency agenda - £1.6m savings made in 11/12 with a further £1m savings identified for 12/13 will not impact on frontline services,

Members commented and asked questions of the Head of Finance in relation to the following:

- a) Reversing Capital Charges – The Head of Finance indicated that the Council were re-distributing internal charges across all areas eg buying refuse fleet was more cost effective to use our own resources. The Council still had £13m in the bank which was earning interest of 1.8%. If we leased the vehicles we would pay 8-9% in leasing costs.
- b) Where does the 4% inflation come from – The 4% is on significant service contracts.
- c) Collection rates for 2011/12 – The Council were on target for collection rates. The Section 25 report focuses on the robustness of the Council's budget. Council Tax was our biggest income. Business rates were marginally below compared to last year.
- d) Capital Resources and not being able to increase this anytime soon and being worried about the long term viability of the Council – This is for a wider political debate/decision. We already share services and when a member of staff leaves there would not be an automatic replacement of post but look at how we can improve with the staff we already have together with partnering opportunities. Rossendale is significantly more efficient than other Districts in some areas, this would be something we would share with Council.
- e) Question relating to Property Maintenance (£357k) – the Surveyor has stated that the Council would need this amount to resolve maintenance liabilities. Further analysis will be made to identify where we should spend our money at an absolute minimum. Appendix 1 to the report summarises where income was coming in and assume £100k in capital receipts.
- f) There was reference to the sale of assets and spending on buildings to make a return. The Head of Finance indicated that The Valley Centre was a return on the Marl Pitts investment. The One Stop Shop does not return any income as it is a support function. In relation to Futures Park, the building is now seven years old and will need to see some spend on it.

NB Councillor Jackson came in to the meeting.

- g) How much was in the budget for the maintenance of Haslingden Pool? The Head of Finance indicated that there was little put aside other than the current money spent collectively by the Leisure Trust and £35k from the Council.
- h) There was a question relating to the Communities budget and the Head of Finance indicated that it was the same as last year.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that the Council had lost 27% of their budget and that they had done an extraordinary job to restructure and reorganise.

Resolved

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends the budget reports to Cabinet for approval.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 and closed at 8.05pm

Signed
(Chair)

Date