

7th December 2015Councillor Jackie Oakes
Chair of the Task and Finish Group
Rossendale Borough Council
Business Directorate
Democratic Services
Room 213
The Business Centre
Futures Park
Bacup
OL13 0BB

Dear Councillor Oakes

Re: Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Report on the Review of North West Ambulance Service

Thank you for your letter dated 13th November 2015 and for giving me the opportunity to comment on the enclosure, 'Rossendale Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group report on the review of ambulance services in Rossendale'.

As requested, I have made some comments highlighted in '**bold**' on the report which I hope are of help. There are also some inaccuracies in the numbers quoted which I have corrected and I would be grateful if these can be changed before the report is issued publicly.

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8	5.3	The A & E at Blackburn is the busiest in the North West, the busiest day in June 2015 receiving 128 ambulances and the busiest in July 2015 receiving 138. On Friday 24 th July the department had an exceptionally busy day receiving 30 ambulances between 1.40pm and 4.10pm.	The A&E at Blackburn is the busiest in the North West, the busiest day in June 2015 receiving 145 ambulances and the busiest in July 2015 receiving 148 . On Friday, 24 th July the department had an exceptionally busy day receiving 27 ambulances between 1.40pm and 4.10pm.
9	5.7	Members were also informed that about one third of patients attending did not need to be at the A&E, but know they would be seen.	Members were also informed that nationally it has been found that about one third of patients attending did not need to be at the A&E, but knew they would be seen.

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9	5.8	The majority of people attending the Emergency Department arrive by ambulance and are usually acutely unwell. On an average day they are seeing around 180 patients.	The majority of people attending the Emergency Department arrive by ambulance and are usually acutely unwell. On an average day they are seeing around 127 patients.
9	5.9	People attending the Urgent Care Centre usually attend with minor injury or illness and are triaged as to where the safest place to be seen is, ie A & E, UCC or GP. There is also a GP on-site between 2-11pm every day.	People attending the Urgent Care Centre usually attend with minor injury or illness and are triaged as to where the safest place to be seen is, ie ED, UCC or GP. There is also a GP on-site between 2-11pm every day.
9	6.3	There are, on a regular basis, 8-9 ambulances at Royal Blackburn at any one time because the Royal Blackburn is the busiest hospital in the North West. On the odd occasion, there had been 13 ambulances.	There are, at peak time , 8-9 ambulances at Royal Blackburn at any one time because the Royal Blackburn is the busiest hospital in the North West. On the odd occasion, there had been 13 ambulances.
9	5.12	During discussion with the ambulance staff, a comment was made about the possibility of the x-ray department at the minor injuries unit in Rawtenstall increasing their opening hours, which would fit in with the opening times of the MIU unit (8am-8pm, 7 days per week).	At this time the x-ray department operates Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm to support the Minor Injuries Unit and GP and outpatient referrals. The Radiology Directorate have previously looked at the activity in terms of patients who are currently referred on for imaging when the x-ray department is not open and the numbers are small though this may be because the range of treatments offered by the Minor Injuries Unit and the patients who can therefore be referred to this facility may be limited by the lack of diagnostics. This is unclear.
9	6.5	It was felt that increasing the x ray opening hours at Rawtenstall to weekend opening would be useful.	
12	8.8	The East Lancashire Hospital Trust look at providing additional resources to enable the x-ray department at the MIU in Rossendale to commence weekend working 8am-8pm, so that the service is available 7 days per week (see 5).	The Directorate would be happy to look at the potential benefits recognised from extending the opening hours of the x-ray department at this facility and this would also offer a greater choice to GPs but this is likely to only be financially viable through agreement of

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			<p>a minimum income guarantee. A minimum of 5 patients per hour would be required to utilise the department to justify the presence of a Band 6 Radiographer and a band 2 receptionist and previous activity levels have not achieve this</p> <p>A mapping exercise would be required to determine what the potential activity through the department could be out of hours during Monday to Friday and on Saturdays and Sundays.</p> <p>We are certainly happy to explore this further.</p>
9	5.12	Proposed ambulance station at RBH	<p>Our Director of Estates has had some conversations with NWS regarding a potential new station at Blackburn. There may be some difficulty in the short term (to house an ambulance station at RBH) because of the congested nature of the site at the present time.</p> <p>However, when the mental health trust leaves the site this may be a time to consider options.</p> <p>There are other potential sites on Old Bank Lane that might become available or other pieces close by which might be suitable I understand NWS are aware of these.</p> <p>We would certainly welcome the provision of a station on the site or close by as this would inevitably improve the coordination between our services.</p>
12	8.10	Extending the building of A and E	<p>You may be aware that Blackburn with Darwen CCG, have secured funding via the Prime Ministers Challenge Fund, to offer additional primary care. Part of their plans include increasing the footprint of our A and E to offer primary care services collocated with our urgent care.</p> <p>We are confident this would ease the pressure on our service and welcome</p>

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			the opportunity to work in partnership with our GP colleagues in this way.

I hope that you find these comments/ corrections useful and please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further help.

Yours sincerely

Kevin McGee
Chief Executive