

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 12 September 2006

Present:

Councillor Chris Davis (Chair)

Councillors John Appleton, George Atkinson, Peter Barnes, Sarah Boad, David Booth, Ken Browne, John Burton, Les Caborn, Tom Cavanagh, Richard Chattaway, Alan Cockburn, Gordon Collett, Jose Compton, Jill Dill-Russell, Michael Doody, Alan Farnell, Anne Forwood, Peter Fowler, Eithne Goode, Richard Grant, Colin Hayfield, John Haynes, Marion Haywood, Martin Heatley, Pat Henry, Bob Hicks, Richard Hobbs, Richard Hyde, Mick Jones, Bernard Kirton, Nina Knapman, Bryan Levy, Barry Longden, Sue Main, Helen McCarthy, Frank McCarney, Phillip Morris-Jones, Brian Moss, Tim Naylor, Mike Perry, Raj Randev, Jerry Roodhouse, John Ross, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe, Dave Shilton, Mota Singh, Ian Smith, Mick Stanley, Bob Stevens, Ray Sweet, B.E.M., June Tandy, Heather Timms, John Vereker, C.B.E., John Wells and John Whitehouse.

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Richard Dodd, Katherine King, Joan Lea, Kam Singh and Sid Tooth.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

District/borough memberships

The following councillors disclosed a personal interest as members of the district or borough council indicated.

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Councillors: Peter Fowler, Colin Hayfield, Brian Moss, Mick Stanley and Ray Sweet.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Councillors Pat Henry and John Ross.

Rugby Borough Council

Councillors: Tom Cavanagh, Gordon Collett and Jerry Roodhouse.

Stratford on Avon District Council

Councillors: John Appleton, Peter Barnes, Richard Hobbs, Sue Main, Mike Perry, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe and Bob Stevens.

Warwick District Council

Councillors: Les Caborn, Alan Cockburn, Jose Compton, Chris Davis, Michael Doody, Eithne Goode and Dave Shilton.

Item 2 Coventry and Warwickshire Acute Services Review

Councillors Colin Hayfield, Eithne Goode, Jose Compton, John Wells, Mota Singh and Richard Dodd declared personal interests as members or associate members of the Primary Care Trusts.

Councillor Bob Hicks declared a prejudicial interest in view of his wife's employment.

Item 3 Police Reform

Councillors Chris Davis, Eithne Goode, Richard Hobbs, Phillip Morris-Jones, Izzi Seccombe, Mota Singh, Ray Sweet and John Vereker declared personal interests as members of the Police Authority.

(3) Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2006 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Announcements

(i) Shipston High School – Formula 200 Award

The Chair advised members that the pupils of the School were unable to attend this Council meeting.

(ii) Petition

Councillor Helen McCarthy presented a petition to the Chair requesting the extension of the opening hours of Studley Library.

(iii) GCSE Results

Councillor John Burton drew attention to the GCSE results and the exemplary results achieved by schools. The Council agreed that its congratulations should be passed to schools, pupils and staff.

2. Coventry & Warwickshire Acute Services Review Consultation Proposals

The Council considered a report which summarised the key proposals from the Acute Services Review Consultation Document. The Council's Area Committees had considered the proposals and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had held a two day scrutiny of the proposals on 31 August and 1 September 2006. The responses of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been circulated to Members before the meeting.

During his introduction of the report, Councillor Bob Stevens, the Deputy Leader of the Council, congratulated the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the work undertaken in preparing a response to the consultation papers. Other members of the Council expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken.

Councillor Bob Stevens moved the following (and was seconded by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse):

A. "That the County Council:

- (1) Fully endorses the recommendations and the views contained in the Health Overview and Scrutiny report.
- (2) That the Chief Executive writes to the Acute Service Board supporting the conclusions reached by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and highlighting major areas of concerns raised during the debate".

Councillor June Tandy indicated her support for the responses and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She was however concerned that the Council's response should be strengthened to avoid any misinterpretation of the Council's decision. Seconded by Councillor Barry Longden, she moved the following amendment:

B. "That the Council fully endorses the recommendations and the views contained in the Health Overview and Scrutiny report subject to the following amendments.

(i) Response at paragraph 2.5 amended to read

The Council fully accepts that the way health services are provided invariably reflects a range of dynamic factors within the environment including the changing needs of populations, developments in evidence-based medicine and in changing clinical practice. The Council also acknowledges the current financial pressures on the NHS locally and nationally and the thrust of national health policy towards greater contestability. In

this context, it is important for the NHS and local government to work together to consider the evidence and determine a way forward that will put in place the best possible responses to the healthcare needs of the populations, which we jointly serve.

(ii) Response at Paragraph 5.2 amended to read

The Council has identified that it is not evident from the consultation document whether there would be sufficient staff or resources to implement this change in working arrangements especially where there are existing recruitment difficulties”.

Members discussed many aspects of the Review and the following points were highlighted:-

- (a) Members noted that the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s response to the consultation would be made separately to the County Council’s response.
- (b) Concern was expressed about the consultations being undertaken, in particular the level of community input and consultations with neighbouring councils.
- (c) The proposals seem to indicate that the George Eliot Hospital could merge with the North Warwickshire Hospital.
- (d) There would be financial implications for the Council of transferring costs to care in the community.
- (e) Benefits could be gained from joint training of staff employed by the Council and the Health Service.
- (f) Concern was expressed about the increased travel movements that would result from the proposals. In particular:
 - Given the geography of the county, people in rural areas could experience severe difficulties in attending hospital owing to the distances involved.
 - There was a need for partnership working with public transport particularly as many people do not have access to a car.
 - Consideration should be given to transport arrangements forming part of any appointment making arrangements.
 - Future driving licence requirements for regular retests could reduce the number of people able to drive to hospital and reduce the availability of hospital drivers.
 - Problems with congestion and parking would make matters worse.
- (g) Members noted that Health Service officers who would have been able to advise on transport and finance issues were unable to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

(h) With regard to proposals for maternity provision, members were concerned about:

- The distances that might have to be travelled for maternity services under the Review proposals, including special care units.
 - The ability of the Walsgrave and University Hospitals to cope bearing in mind current difficulties in coping with any small increases in demand for such services.
 - Higher need for special care units in areas of deprivation.
- (i) Further consideration should be given to how the Health Service proposed to look after people leaving hospital. Possible that local surgeries would be able to provide increased services although there would be resource limitations.
- (j) Information was needed on many issues, as outlined in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's response, including a race equality assessment, a health impact assessment and a risk assessment.
- (k) Members were concerned that what worked in other parts of the country would not necessarily work in Warwickshire.
- (l) Whilst members supported proposals for the Cancer Service, they were concerned that there were no financial resources available for the proposals.
- (m) The importance of Partnership working at all times.
- (n) Integrated treatment proposals must take into account circumstance prior to getting to hospital.

In response to several points Mr Newbold advised the Council that:

- The Review was driven by consensus and the proposals were aligned to the national direction of travel in the Health Service.
- The Review endeavoured to make sense of what was seen to be a confusing set up.
- Any changes to hospitals would be minimal.
- There was a need for principles to be defined for hospitals to follow in the future.
- Clinical principles adhered to.
- The consultation process for the review had involved 66 meetings in 12 weeks
- It was possible that transport issues were not seen by health service as their problem

- The proposals relating to Cancer Service were not funded but the Review proposals would influence the Services priority.
- The new Ambulance Trust was keen to carry on from where the previous Trust had left off.
- The Council was assured that its views would be submitted to the Board in November and that the Strategic Health Authority would be advised of the feedback.

Councillor Bob Stevens, with the consent of his seconder, modified his motion to include Councillor June Tandy's amendment with the addition of "supports in principle" being added to paragraph 5.2. Councillor June Tandy with the consent of her seconder, then withdrew her amendment. The motion, as follows, was then put to the vote and was carried with no member voting against.

Resolved:

That the County Council:

(1) Fully endorses the recommendations and the views contained in the Health Overview and Scrutiny report with the following amendments:

(i) Response at paragraph 2.5 amended to read

2.5 The Council fully accepts that the way health services are provided invariably reflects a range of dynamic factors within the environment including the changing needs of populations, developments in evidence-based medicine and in changing clinical practice. The Council also acknowledges the current financial pressures on the NHS locally and nationally and the thrust of national health policy towards greater contestability. In this context, it is important for the NHS and local government to work together to consider the evidence and determine a way forward that will put in place the best possible responses to the healthcare needs of the populations, which we jointly serve.

(ii) Response at Paragraph 5.2 amended to read

5.2 The Council supports the proposal in principle but has identified that it is not evident from the consultation document whether there would be sufficient staff or resources to implement this change in working arrangements especially where there are existing recruitment difficulties.

(2) That the Chief Executive writes to the Acute Service Board supporting the conclusions reached by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and

highlighting major areas of concern raised during the debate, in particular that transport issues, especially access to hospitals, were not satisfactorily addressed and required further consideration.

3. Notices of Motions (Standing Order 5)

(1) Police Reform

Councillor Izzi Seccombe proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor June Tandy:

“That the County Council notes the announcement by the Home Secretary on 19 June 2006 that he would not be proceeding with the enforced police force mergers.

Given that the Warwickshire Police Authority and the Police Force have invested considerable resources in pursuing the reform agenda the County Council expresses its support for the actions being taken by our Police Authority and Police Force to recover the costs involved and resolves to write to the Home Office to this effect.”

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was AGREED with no member voting against and one abstention.

4. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)

Councillor John Ross asked Councillor Martin Heatley, the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Environment, the following question regarding recycling batteries:

“Is the portfolio holder aware of the recent decision of the European Parliament to adopt a new directive on the recycling of batteries and what steps have the County Council made in accord with this?”

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“Yes, I am aware of the decision and that it had come out of a directive that would come into force next year. The Government had not yet funded local authorities. There are collection facilities at the Council’s household waste sites”.

Councillor Ross asked the following supplementary question:

“The UK is currently one of the worst EU members states in terms of battery collection and recycling. Is the portfolio holder aware of any steps being taken nationally to support local authorities in their attempts to reduce the volume of batteries sent to landfill each year and to implement the EU directive?”

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“Nationally less than 2-5% of batteries are collected or recycled. I am unaware of steps being taken nationally to collect”.

Sarah Boad then asked:

“Should not all members be made aware of the current situation relating to the collection of batteries in order that they can advise communities”.

Martin Heatley replied:

“This will be done”.

5. Any other items of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

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Chair