

APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2016 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, from Councillor Steve Carr

Would the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board join me in condemning the government's plan for dividing the NHS in England into 44 areas or 'footprints', each of which has a 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' (STP)? Do you agree with me that these plans are intended to help the government to slash, trash and privatise our NHS - leaving local areas to deal with the crisis that follows?

Response from Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board

For those people who are not aware, the development of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) followed the publication of the 5 year Forward View in 2014 which identified a £30billion shortfall in the finances of the NHS by the end of this Parliament without additional funding or changing the way treatment and care is delivered.

The Chief Executive of the NHS, Simon Stevens said that it was possible to achieve greater levels of efficiency and better outcomes in the NHS by changing the way that the increasing need and demand was dealt with. This includes how an increasing number of older people who represent 70% of those in hospital at any one time are cared for. Also a genuine need to focus the attention on prevention, providing more integrated care at home and investing in technology and innovation.

A recent Kings Fund report identifies a £1.9bn shortfall in adult social care funding by next year and £2.3billion by 2020. The Government then instructed every area to have a plan for integrating health and social care by 2020 in the hope that this might address that shortfall. This is why the process has included local authority services as well as the Health Service. I have never stopped, and people will have heard this many times, I have never stopped saying how under-funded both Adult Social Care and Health are, the funding cuts are unsustainable and put the very essence of our National Health Service at risk.

It is quite clear that our health and care services are under immense pressure with the overwhelming majority of acute trusts experiencing a deficit this year and similarly an increasing number of Clinical Commissioning Groups are heading toward a deficit.

From a survey of local authorities conducted in October, 72% were overspent by a total of £455million after the first six months of this financial year and that is even before the pressures associated with winter are piled on top.

There desperately needs to be national decisions and considerations about the amount of funding available for health and care, we cannot and should not ignore the health needs of this country and we continue to campaign on this.

So how do we make sense of all of that here in Nottinghamshire? At the same time it is our responsibility locally, here in Nottinghamshire to ensure that we are making the best use of the money available to us, limited though it is. STP's involve considering gaps in health and wellbeing in our local communities, care and quality in services and finances and having a plan to address all of these. These plans are a reality of a Conservative Government and the only way we can get the best for Nottinghamshire is if we get involved. I came reluctantly to the STPs because like other people I had misgivings also. However, rather than standing on the side lines saying its money that we need not plans, I decided in the best interests of Nottinghamshire, I would get involved.

Do I have concerns? You are dead right, of course I do. I am under no illusion about what this Government is trying to do to our health service and there is no one more angry and frustrated than me with the ongoing unnecessary cuts from Government to Adult Social Care.

In Nottinghamshire we are part of two footprints - Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw. It is no secret that I, along with others would have liked to have had one County-wide approach to this, but Bassetlaw, in what they have deemed to be their best interests have gone with South Yorkshire. And that is fine, as far as I am concerned they are still Nottinghamshire people and I have duty of care, as we all do, to the people of Bassetlaw. So I intend to work as closely as possible with them to make sure that the quality services are maintained and I have also been asked by Bassetlaw and South Yorkshire STP to formally join their board, which bodes well for the future I think.

We are one of only four of the 44 authorities in this Country where a local authority officer is leading the STP as part of his responsibilities. David Pearson was asked by the Chief Executive of the NHS to lead the organisations in Nottinghamshire in the development of the plan. We agreed to David taking on this role given his local and national experience and in my view he is doing a cracking job, so thank you. The national guidance by Government to the NHS has been to develop the plan and then to share it with the public. I understand the concerns people have, and I do remain very sceptical about the process nationally but I think here in Nottinghamshire there has been some real plans to involve different organisations and plans for further involvement as well, particularly from the voluntary sector and also Healthwatch, and to a large extent the plan is based on engagement and involvement that has been carried out with communities as part of the ongoing improvement of services.

David has given six presentations to the public session in the Health and Wellbeing Board, and given radio and press interviews. Given the national requirements there have been attempts to make the process as open as possible, I think we have done that. Nottinghamshire has a national reputation for innovation through the vanguards and local people have been heavily involved in the development of the changed services. A summary of the plan, with a link to the full plan is being published today. We are reassured that the plan is not final and feedback on the plan will be received

until mid-January. After this each organisation will be asked to formally consider the plan including the County Council.

The purpose of the plan is to achieve the best health and wellbeing outcomes and I am pleased that there is a strong focus on prevention and increasing the healthy life expectancy of our population by three years during the life of the plan improve care and quality, particularly in primary, community and social care services.

It is going to be difficult because we are responsible for public health now as a County Council and the public health grant is diminishing as well. So on all fronts we are trying to wrestle the best we can with reduced resources and it is difficult.

We can work in different ways that's true, but that should not be at the detriment of public services. For fear of repetition I will say again – a plan for change of our key health and social care services is only going to work effectively if there is appropriate funding available, and that is what we must continue to fight for.

Rest assured that Health and Social Care Practitioners will continue to wrestle with the challenges of providing good, quality services with ever depleting resources.

Now that the plan is published I think we should actively engage with our constituents, as members we should scrutinise the details and take every opportunity to constructively challenge where needed and we should make it very clear that the people of Nottinghamshire deserve a health service that meets their needs.

We should all examine fully the plans to understand its implications for local people. I am committed to high quality, public services, I am committed to a National Health Service that is free at the point of need and I will continue to campaign for fair funding of our services.

Unfortunately, listening to Phillip Hammond yesterday as he delivered his Autumn Statement said absolutely nothing about investment in health and social care. So, I am always optimistic and I am hoping that these things might change, but I am not holding my breath and I actually think it is about time the rhetoric stopped and they put their hand in their pocket.

On the 26th November the Labour Party has a national campaign day for our health services and adult social care. This is not just a political thing, because I know that people on my right here feel just as passionately about the Health Service as I do. So all I would ask for wherever possible if you can bang a drum for increasing investment in health and social care please do so.

Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor John Ogle

At Full Council on 26th November 2015, I presented a 483-signature petition requesting a pedestrian crossing on Newark Road outside the Tuxford Primary Academy.

Petitioners were subsequently informed by the County Council that pedestrian and traffic surveys had been undertaken and the criteria for a crossing had not been met, but the letter concluded:-

‘We will... keep the request for a formal crossing at this location on file. Should the traffic conditions outside the school change significantly in the future... we will reconsider the scheme request.’

Is the Chairman of the Transport & Highways Committee aware that since those surveys were completed, there have been further developments at the school which impact upon pedestrian and vehicular traffic:-

- there is a school breakfast club, meaning children arrive especially early;
- there are new after-school activities where children and parents leave the school late (in darkness at this time of year); and,
- the school library has moved from Darlton Road to the school premises on Newark Road?

In view of these changes and ongoing local concerns about traffic near the school, would he agree to a new traffic assessment, to measure the risk now posed to child and adult pedestrians at this location?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

A number of traffic surveys have been undertaken outside Tuxford primary Academy to determine if the site meets the criteria for a school crossing patrol or a formal pedestrian crossing.

These surveys count the traffic passing through the site to determine if there are sufficient gaps in the traffic to enable people to cross. The survey also counts the numbers of pedestrians crossing in the vicinity of a request, and typically formal crossings are provided where there are significant numbers of pedestrians crossing throughout the day.

The surveys undertaken show that traffic volumes on the A6075 Newark Road outside the school were low and that the majority of the vehicles travelling past the school at the peak times were in fact parents picking up or dropping off their children. As the traffic volumes were low it meant that pedestrians of all ages had sufficient opportunity to cross the road.

Therefore for this location to be prioritised for a pedestrian crossing the numbers of pedestrians crossing the road throughout the day in the vicinity of the school, and the numbers of vehicles travelling along the road, would both need to have significantly increased.

The most recent survey undertaken to determine if the site meets the criteria for the provision of a school crossing patrol was undertaken only last week (on 14th November 2016) and the site still does not meet the criteria.

Officers have also already considered whether a formal crossing would be required following the expansion of the school as part of the planning process. It is also worth noting that it is not only the County Council that has determined that a formal crossing is not required outside the school. Consultants carried out a transport assessment on behalf of Tuxford Primary Academy in relation to the planning application for the expansion of the school. Tuxford Primary Academy's consultants also concluded that a pedestrian crossing outside the school was not required, and would not be required as a result of the proposed expansion of the school.

I will, however, ask officers to undertake the necessary traffic surveys to determine if the changes highlighted by Councillor Ogle mean that the site now meets the criteria for the provision of a formal crossing.

Question to the Chairman of the Policy Committee, from Councillor John Wilmott

Can the Chairman of the Policy Committee agree with me that it is a scandal to hear that there are almost 9,000 empty and derelict properties within Nottinghamshire?

Homelessness and the refugees are constantly in our local papers so, as Leader of the Council, could the Chairman, on behalf of the County Council, write and influence all our district and borough councils to bring back their long-term empty properties as a priority?

Would the Chairman agree with me that in bringing these empty properties to life it would make Nottinghamshire a vibrant and desirable place to live with less homeless people on our streets and a place to call home for our refugees?

Response from Councillor Alan Rhodes, Chairman of the Policy Committee

Firstly, it is only right that I remind Councillor Willmott that we are not a housing authority, however both issues he raises are important.

It's alarming that across England, since 2010, the number of homeless people sleeping rough on the streets has doubled and headline or 'statutory' homelessness has increased by 44%.

Under the Labour Government from 1997-2010 which I know Councillor Willmott supported, rough sleeping fell by 75 per cent and statutory homelessness was reduced by nearly two-thirds.

There are a number of often complex reasons as to why people become homeless and that is why as a Local Authority we provide many preventative services and support from our health teams, from adult social care and our community safety teams.

Our grant aid funding has consistently supported the most vulnerable in our communities. In fact it is our policy to put the most vulnerable first.

Here at Nottinghamshire County Council, we can make a difference by ensuring that there are preventative and support services for people with the aim, to ensure, that they do not become homeless.

I believe that as a country we should be doing all we can to ensure everyone has a safe place to live, free from harm and prejudice. As a county we are playing our part in the refugee programme alongside our partner agencies.

You are probably aware that there is a Homelessness Reduction Bill going through Parliament at the moment, which is now at the committee stage. The bill has cross political support.

The Homelessness Reduction Bill aims to bring down high levels of homelessness by placing stronger duties on councils to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness at an earlier stage.

The obvious proviso with this bill is that there should be sufficient funding in public services and local communities if we are serious about resolving the very real issues and are able to deliver what the bill expects us to. The bill should be fully funded by Government.

We will continue to work with our districts, partners, stakeholders and voluntary sector to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.