

**Committee and Date**

Loton, Longden Ford and Rea
Valley Local Joint Committee

16th February 2017, 16th
February 2017

Item

1

Public

**LOTON LONGDEN FORD AND REA VALLEY
LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

**NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS STEMMING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 21ST APRIL
AT
MARY WEBB SCHOOL, PONTESBURY**

Responsible Officers Mathew Mead and David Fairclough
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Committee Members Present:**Shropshire Council**

Roger Evans Longden Ward
David Roberts Loton Ward

Town/Parish Councils

David Sandbach Westbury Parish Council
Roy Bayley MBE Montford Parish Council
John Pritchard Pontesbury Parish Council
Geoff Brown Minsterley Parish Council
Neil Evans Longden Parish Council
Bill Clyne Ford Parish Council
John Fox Great Hanwood Parish Council

Officers Present:

Mathew Mead Community Enablement Officer
David Fairclough Community Enablement Officer
Debbie Vogler NHS Future Fit Programme Director
Councillor Malcolm Pate Leader of Shropshire Council
Duncan Fletcher Pontesbury Parish Council

1. Welcome and apologies

Councillor David Roberts welcomed councillors and members of the public and thanked the two speakers for their attendance at the meeting
Apologies had been received from Tudor Bebb

2. Substitutions

Councillor Roy Bayley attended on behalf of Montford Parish Council
Declarations of interest

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made

4. Notes of the last meeting on 10th September 2015 at Minsterley Village Hall

Amendments were requested to the following items

- The meeting was Chaired by David Roberts not Roger Evans
- John Pritchard was the LJC rep for Pontesbury, although Duncan Fletcher was in attendance at the meeting
- Item 1 should have read “David Roberts was nominated and unanimously approved as Chairman of the meeting by the Committee. Roger Evans and Tudor Bebb were nominated and approved as Joint Vice Chairs of the meeting

These amendments will be made and notes of the meeting approved at the next full LJC meeting

5. Presentation – Councillor Malcolm Pate, Leader of Shropshire Council. Update on Shropshire Councils Financial Strategy and its possible impacts on services in Shropshire and the LJC area

Councillor Pate thanked the Committee for the invitation to the meeting. He stated that the financial situation of Shropshire Council was a difficult one, and he wasn't in a position he or his fellow Councillors enjoyed of having to look at reductions to Council services. However a series of factors left Shropshire Council with no choice but to reduce its budget. He outlined the reasons behind this

In December 2015 Central Government announced it was to remove the revenue grants it gives to Local Authorities, but would in return allow them to keep locally collected business rates. While Shropshire does have a good economy, it is made up of many agricultural or small businesses which pay either no business rates or a small amount. So overall the new business rate income would be a lot less than the revenue grant the Council previously received

At the same time the cost of statutory services the Council has to provide was going up, particularly the adult social care budget. As Shropshire has an older than average population, in a large rural county providing these services is more costly than in urban areas, but proportionally Shropshire gets less funding for these services – around 35p per person per day, compared to 65p in urban areas. Adult Social care makes up a high percentage of the Council's spending, and costs continue to rise. This year Council Tax has risen by 1.99% to help meet the costs but this is still below the rate that costs are increasing.

Other services the Council provides such as waste collection, schools, transport and highways maintenance are also more difficult to provide due to the sparse rural population in Shropshire, and the cost per head is higher than in urban areas.

All of these factors mean that should Shropshire Council keep spending at its current rate it would have a budget deficit of £80 million by 2020, and legally the Council can't run a deficit budget, so has had to produce a financial plan which balances the books. This unfortunately means some services will have to change or stop. These include items like libraries,

museums and countryside sites, public transport other non-statutory services the Council runs.

The Council has consulted people through The Big Conversation to identify which services people feel must be preserved, and those which they feel could be delivered differently or by groups other than the Council. Shropshire Council is also lobbying Central Government to review its rural funding formulas to get a better deal for rural areas, and is supported in this by other rural councils. Some additional funds had already been secured, and in May the Minister Greg Clarke was coming to Shropshire to see for himself what the impact of funding cuts for Shropshire would be.

Work is also taking place to save money where possible. The Council will now stay at Shirehall, and new solar panels have been installed on the building to generate cheaper, green energy. Work is also progressing to link Shropshire in with devolved government in the West Midlands which can bring with it opportunities to access new funding streams, although there was some scepticism as to how much power and funding would be devolved. The company IP&E has also been wound up, and staff brought into Shropshire Council. While the company didn't work as it was hoped the more commercial skills these staff have can still benefit the Council.

Shropshire Council is limited in the amount it can raise the precept by, and has frozen the Council Tax rates in the last few years. Possibly this was a mistake as small rises each year would have alleviated some of the budget pressures on the Council. Shropshire Council is discussing with Town and Parish Councils the possibility of them taking on some services, and using their local precept to fund them.

Councillor Pate then took questions from the Committee and members of the public

A question was asked how much IP&E had cost the Council. Councillor Pate said it cost around £800,000 a year, but did provide services the Council would have had to provide anyway. The principle of having a more commercial focus was a good one, but the timing of the launch of IP&E wasn't good with bigger operators able to win contracts. The staff in IP&E could return to the Council and use their skills within the organisation

The issue of Shropshire Council's reserves was raised, as the accounts show there is £15 million in reserve. Why aren't these funds being used to support services? Councillor Pate replied that the Council reserves should actually be higher than £15 million and were only there for an emergency situation, not to top up on going revenue costs. If they were spent the money is then lost and it would be inappropriate to run the Council with no or little reserves

Councillors raised the issue that the LJC had already considered pooling some parish council funds into a wider pot for use across the area, but had been advised that Parish funds could only be spent in the Parish where they were paid. This issue needed looking at some rural services have services which neighbouring parishes use.

A comment was made that residents already pay for services through their Council Tax and asking them to pay again through their Town or Parish Council was in effect taxing them twice for the same service. Councillor Pate said that in no way was Shropshire Council forcing Councils to pay for services but it was a conversation that needed to take place.

Legally Councils can raise funds to run services for their community so needed to be considered. Support to consult with residents would also be looked at.

Members of the Committee said that Councils were looking at running some services, and while the front line service delivery could work at a local level, it still needed some back office support from Shropshire Council. For example access to library books and lending services for community run libraries. Councillor Pate acknowledged this was an issues and said in the case of libraries there would be back office support available. The Council would look to support other areas too but again the budget had to be balanced and some functions of the Council were not statutory services so remained under threat

Councillor Roberts thanked Malcolm for attending the meeting and answering questions. These would be issues the LJC would no doubt return to in the coming weeks and months.

6. Presentation – Debbie Vogler, NHS Future Fit Shropshire Programme Director

Update on Future Fit programme in Shropshire including details of the next stages of public consultation

Councillor Roberts welcomed Debbie to the meeting and said that the Committee had received previous presentations on Future Fit, so were aware of the overall aims of the project. The aim of today's presentation was to update the committee and community on the next stages.

Debbie started the presentation by explaining that the aims of Future Fit remained as they were at the start of the programme which is to provide a modern, sustainable model for health care in Shropshire, which meets the challenges of Shropshire's rural population. This includes looking at acute care, but it's also very much about local and preventative care and its these elements of the programme that are being looked at, as they were identified as gaps in the programme.

A Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) is now being developed involving partner organisations to look at how the different elements of the programme from acute services; through local and urgent care centres to community fit work can be linked together to provide the best outcomes for patients. The STP has to look at outline challenges, priorities and governance structures first, and then a plan will be submitted to NHS England in the Summer.

The key challenges in Shropshire remain the large area and sparse population of Shropshire, and the difficulty of recruiting staff. The size of units in Shropshire such as urgent care centres and treatment units means that it's harder to recruit staff, and those that do work here have to work more regular shifts than colleagues in urban areas. Advanced training opportunities for trainee doctors are also less in rural areas. These challenges can be over-come by having bigger units, but then people have to travel further to access them. Finding the right balance between centres that are large enough to provide top class care, whilst also being local enough for people to get to is a key challenge for Shropshire.

Some acute services are already located outside of Shropshire, and depending on where patients live they might access these services at Wolverhampton, Stoke or at Shrewsbury or Telford. Outcomes suggest care at these specialist centres has better outcomes for patients, but travel times, including ambulance response times need to be factored in as well. It is also

important that these centres focus on real acute needs, and less serious cases remain treated closer to where the patient lives.

The Future Fit programme acknowledges that the terms it uses have not always been helpful to people understanding the proposals. While the programme has looked at locating acute emergency care on one site in Telford or Shropshire, a whole range of other services would remain at other sites, as well as in other locations in Shropshire. Where these services are best located is still being looked at, but do need to be explained more accurately by Future Fit. The programme is also looking at a more balanced approach to services across the two main sites in Telford and Shropshire.

As Councillor Pates presentation showed adult social care is also a major issue in Shropshire, as good care will prevent people from going to hospital, and make it easier for them to leave hospital after treatment. Around 2% of adult social care clients account for 33% of costs to the service, so targeting their care is important. Equally it is estimated that 32% of emergency admissions could be prevented by improvements to community care. The programme needs to test out models on how to address this.

The Future Fit programme is now on a tight deadline to put its next business case together by the summer for NHS England to review and test, to make sure the savings are accurate and also that the new model produces clinical outcomes too. Once through that phase a further period of public consultation would take place in 2017.

Debbie then took questions from the Committee

Councillor Roger Evans suggested that previous Future Fit models had two main flaws. The lack of input from mid Wales, whose residents use Shrewsbury hospital; and part of the changes require GP's surgeries to take on more work. How will these be addressed?

Debbie said that much more work had now taken place with Welsh authorities and services, who have a place on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan board. Data shows that the percentage of Welsh patients using Shrewsbury hospital is not that high, and Welsh authorities prefer to see their funding go into Welsh services. However the cross boarder issues were very much part of the review process.

The role of GP surgeries is defiantly one that is part of the next stage of review. The programme acknowledges that not all surgeries have the same capabilities, and some GP's are anxious about their capacity to deliver services, such as local treatment centres. However the government had recently announced a significant amount of new funding for GP's or up to 30% extra, which should allow them to take on more services. However this needed to be reflected across the county so that people used local centres where possible, rather than travel to the large sites for care that could be better delivered locally.

Members of the committee pointed out that cuts to adult social care in Shropshire may impact on the models Future Fit were developing, and were these changes being factored into the process. Debbie replied by saying that these discussions were very much part of the programme and the council and other partners were on the board and part of the process. What can't happen is for a cut in one area to simply be passed onto another partner as that doesn't solve the problem.

Councillor Sandbach said that he felt there were issues with the potential solutions that Future Fit were looking at over the mix of planned and acute care. More work needed to be done on each site to provide a better mix of services. Debbie acknowledged these issues and said it was an area still being developed. As previous meetings had shown each new model had to be tested within Future Fit and externally to make sure it worked, and as such potential solutions would change through time.

Other Councillors pointed out the proposed timescales were very tight, and what happened if they were to slide? Debbie said there were a lot of pressures to meet the timescales, especially with local elections next May taking place. But at the moment the programme was confident the new timetable was workable.

Councillor Roberts thanked Debbie for attending the meeting and said the Committee would continue to monitor the Future Fit programme.

7. Smart Water in Loton, Longden Ford and Rea Valley

David Fairclough outlined details of the potential for Parish Councils to link up with the Police to provide Smart Water to their communities at a reduced rate. This issue had been raised at the LJC planning meeting where the Police and Smartwater had been in attendance. However, full details of the costs of the scheme had yet been sent to the officers. Once these were made available they would be circulated to the Committee

8. Police Report

Copies of the April Police report were circulated at the meeting. Overall the area is low in crime. However residents needed to be aware of rural crimes such as thefts from outbuildings and sheds, especially in the summer months when these buildings were likely to be in use. Angie Roberts, a CSO in the area would be moving to work in the town centre, but a new CSO would be joining the team as her replacement.

9. Youth Activity

Richard Parkes from the Shropshire Youth Association gave a short update on progress of the Youth Commissioning work in the LJC area. New clubs had been established in Westbury and Minsterley. The Westbury club was going well and catering for a range of young people in that village. Minsterley had new members, but had capacity for more, so it was proposed to reduce the age at which young people could attend this group. The Committee approved of this proposal

The existing clubs at Nesscliffe, Ford and Hanwood were also doing well. These were supported by SYA with LJC and Parish Council funding. However LJC funding for these would reduce in the next year and early discussions with those communities on how to sustain these clubs would be needed in the coming months

10. Public question time

A member of the public asked if central government was going to overrule SAMDev and allow more housing in Shropshire.

Councillor Roberts replied that SAMDev was approved by the Planning Inspector in late 2015 and approved by Shropshire Council early in 2016. This gave the Council much more structure to its policy and more grounds to turn down speculative applications.

Mathew Mead suggested that a new Housing Bill was going through Parliament and that bill may have some impact on Shropshire Councils policies if national policy changed. However

the House of Lords had requested amendments to the bill to give Town and Parish Councils more say in planning decisions. Time would tell if these proposals are incorporated into the final bill.

Duncan Fletcher suggested that the future of Pontesbury Library and the possible links to the new health hub should be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.

11. Date of next meeting(s)

Future meeting dates will be set by the Enablement Officers in conjunction with the Councillors.

Chair_____

Date_____