

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 October 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Wreford-Bush (Chairman); Councillors Copping, Mrs Falp, Gill, and Mrs Higgins.

Also present: Councillor Mrs Knight (Co-opted, non-voting Member).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kinson OBE.

12. **Substitutes**

Councillor Mrs Higgins substituted for Councillor Illingworth.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

14. **Warwickshire Community Transport**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Kim Slater, the Chief Executive at Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) and Mr Gareth Jones, the Project Manager for Health Transport Service at WRCC to the meeting. Mr Slater and Mr Jones gave a presentation on the current position regarding the funding and service provided by the Warwickshire Community Transport Volunteer Service. This service provided transport for mostly the elderly who struggle to get to medical appointments, mainly to hospital and the administration was handled by the WRCC. The actual transport was provided by volunteer drivers using their own cars.

The WRCC had taken over management of the service in 2010 and had since implemented a number of improvements to the service, which included an increase in the number of volunteer drivers, an increase in opening hours and a reduction in the lead time required between making a request for transport to actually receiving the transport. The service was now available five days a week and the lead time had been reduced from five to two days. Additionally, the eligibility to use the service of being 65 years of age, or over, had been removed, and anyone in genuine need, could take advantage of the service.

The average age of the clients using the service was 80, and most of these were female. The WRCC had promoted the service by advertising in supermarkets and forging close links with GP surgeries.

Whilst the service provided had improved, over the same period, it had seen a drop in funding caused by the changes to the way the country's health system had changed and the cessation of the PCTs, which had provided a substantial amount of the funding. Consequently all voluntary transport schemes had approached Healthwatch and other bodies to find alternative funding. Healthwatch had commissioned ABIC Limited to carry out a review and options appraisal, which made four recommendations and identified five different models of working. Mr Slater maintained that there

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were a number of holes in the argument that the five separate voluntary transport schemes should merge.

The passenger only paid 45 pence per mile, which on average saved each client £18.99 per return journey when compared to using a taxi service or other means of transport. The WRCC had introduced an administration fee charge to each client but this still left a significant shortfall in funding. This shortfall would not be sustainable. The service had no choice but to look for other means of funding and in this respect, Mr Slater asked the Council to review the WDC travel token scheme and divert some of this income to the voluntary transport service.

Following the presentation, Members sought clarity on various issues and it emerged that:

- the voluntary transport service provided 42,000 county wide journeys, of which it was estimated that 4,600 were provided to residents within the District;
- whilst there were some transport services provided locally by hospitals, these were very small schemes and attempts by the WRCC to liaise with these providers had proven fairly unsuccessful;
- parking costs at hospitals in Coventry were paid by the clients;
- the voluntary transport service had no objection to serving younger customers, but these might be charged a slightly higher fee;
- within the District, there were 30 volunteer drivers and six administration staff;
- funding was currently received via two main sources, £5,000 from Warwickshire County Council, and £5,300 from Public Health. The cessation of PCTs meant a loss in income of £10,000. The CCGs focused mainly on the West Midlands Ambulance Service and the Voluntary Transport Service was viewed purely as "nice to have" consequently funding had not been provided by the CCGs. Whilst various Town Councils had been approached for funding, these were viewed as "one-offs" rather than a source of on-going finance. Mr Slater appealed for help finding the right people to contact and to break down barriers. One Councillor suggested that the service should increase its fee scales but Mr Slater reiterated that the main client base was people aged 80 plus.

The Chairman thanked Mr Slater and Mr Jones for the presentation and answering Councillors' questions.

15. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to changing "South Warwickshire Care Commissioning Group" in the second paragraph of point 11 to "South Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group".

16. **Air Quality in the District**

The Head of Health and Community Protection and the Environmental Sustainability Manager gave a presentation on the latest report on air quality in the District. From the charts presented, it was clear that there were hotspots where air quality was not as good as in the rest of the

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District, for instance nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels had increased around the Northgate area in Warwick, due to traffic emissions. Although buses on the Parade caused noticeable fumes for pedestrians, pollution monitoring did not indicate that the area exceeded pollution limits. This particular issue was being considered with a view to force drivers to turn off the bus engine when waiting for any length of time.

Members requested that an annual report on air quality be brought to Scrutiny every October, with a six-monthly update on any work being done to improve air quality. The findings from a transport survey in Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa should also be brought to Scrutiny when they became available.

17. **Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report from Democratic Services on the Sub-Committee's work programme.

Warwickshire Voluntary Transport

The Committee Services Officer was asked to find out whether the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee should look into the taxi token scheme to see if some money raised through this could be diverted to the Warwickshire Voluntary Transport Service.

Warwick District Council Health Strategy Update

The Health and Wellbeing Lead informed the Members that:

- the revised smoke free policy had been drafted;
- on 11 September, he had met with the Health & Wellbeing Officer, Warwick Hospital, to discuss joint projects, including "measured miles" with the benefit of a "Green Spaces" grant from Public Health, Warwickshire;
- a "taxi morning" had been held on 17 September at which 15 smoking/obesity etc resource packs had been issued;
- he had presented an update on the Health Strategy to the Senior Management Team on 24 September;
- on 30 September he had discussed the promotion of the Heartbeat Award and the campaign on smoking in vehicles with the Head of Regulatory Services;
- on 1 October he had attended a meeting of Community and Voluntary Action (CAVA) on the future of Warwick District Health and Wellbeing Partnership (HIWEB) and to establish terms of reference. He had also attended a meeting with Social landlords in respect of community development monies;
- on 2 October a discussion had taken place at Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum with an emphasis on bringing a health and wellbeing theme to events; and
- on 7 October, the Warwickshire Food for Health Group had discussed developing a specification for bids to the County Social Welfare fund for food projects and they had been asked to look at healthy food promotion.

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Councillor Knight informed Members that she had attended a conference that morning entitled "Will Housing be part of Health and Care Integration" given by Warwickshire's Older People's Forum and she had been impressed by Professor Stoten's presentation and felt it would be relevant to us. Ken Bruno, the Housing Strategy and Development Officer had also been present at the conference. Members agreed that he should be invited to a Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting to speak about the standards the Council insists upon for our own housing stock in respect of health and wellbeing.

The Director of Public Health's presentation to Council on 24 September 2014

Members agreed that Dr Linnane's presentation had been well received.

Following consideration of the Work Programme, it was

Resolved that:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) Professor Brian Stoton, Chairman UK Public Health Register and Chairman of Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Board, be invited to address Full Council;
- (3) Mr Andrew Matthews from the South Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group - Patient & Public Participation Group, be invited to give a talk to the Sub-Committee on the work of the this Group; and
- (4) invite the Housing Strategy and Development Officer to a Health Scrutiny meeting to talk about standards this Council insists upon for its own housing stock in respect of health and wellbeing.

(The meeting finished at 5.47 pm)