

REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

COUNCILLOR TONY AUSTIN

HEALTH AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

I attended the above L.C.C. Committee at County Hall on 12th. July, to represent RVBC. The full minutes are publicly available on the web-site.

The main item was the update on the new hospitals programme. Jerry Hawker, Director of Transformation for the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (LSCICB) reported that the recent Government £20B statement on new hospitals had included two new hospitals to replace the Royal Preston Hospital and the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. The Committee expressed great pleasure at the decision and asked questions for over an hour.

Further work is now underway to assess potential locations for 50-acre sites and to develop the business case. It is intended that the highest modern standards will be included in the design, which will be for 100% single rooms, to support infection control. Clinicians would decide where specialities would be distributed and how these would interface better with community health services and local G.Ps. Both hospital construction and operation would be net zero carbon. In answer to my question, it was confirmed that a working group would be looking at the public transport implications of the various potential sites.

Lord Markham, a Health Minister, will be informally meeting the Scrutiny Committee at Preston later in August, to discuss the proposals .

Dr. Levy, the Chief Medical Director for LSCICB, also gave the meeting an update on Virtual Wards. Currently, there are 393 virtual beds available across 15 virtual wards. Development of this function enables better utilisation on beds in 'real' hospital wards. The facility mainly involves the treatment of discharged patients in their own homes and uses a sophisticated App called Docebo , to enable detailed monitoring of these people remotely by medical staff.

The Committee also had a presentation on Integrated Neighbourhood Teams for better joined-up working by professionals outside hospitals in the community. Finally the Committee was presented with a proposed plan of work for the Council Year '23/'24, including about 30 different topics, some of which would be handled by a Steering Group. Concern was expressed at the multiplicity of work to be handled in only 6 more Scrutiny meetings.