

REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES COUNCILLOR TONY AUSTIN

HEALTH AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

On 25th October 2023, I attended a Scrutiny Committee at County Hall. The main item discussed was presented by Louise Taylor, Executive Director of LCC Adult Services, along with two managers from the Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB). They provided a detailed update on the joint working of Lancashire Place and consulted the Scrutiny Committee on the way forward. There was a lengthy discussion on how the current Lancashire Health & Wellbeing Board might integrate effectively with the ICB. Borough members of the Scrutiny Committee strongly requested that all twelve lower-tier LAs should be fully represented within any governance structure. Suggestions were also made that it would be right to include some representation from the voluntary health sector.

The second item at that meeting was to review the Housing with Care & Support Strategy 2018-2025. Kashif Ahmed, the relevant LCC director, reported that the supported housing growth was not proceeding fast enough to reach the 2025 Extra Care Provision target of 1000 units across the County. Planning delays were cited as one possible cause. Suggestions were made regarding more intensive use of the existing assisted housing stock. The Health Scrutiny Steering Group reported on their most recent meeting, which had dealt with matters including the adequacy of NHS and adult social care winter planning, child public health, the NHS Health Check Programme and the ICB's Stroke Service ; following my own study of the published proposals for a new mental health unit at Whittingham, I asked that the Steering Group should question the cost-effectiveness of the proposed bed provision in what otherwise appeared to be an excellent design

On 4th December, I attended a further Scrutiny Committee. Kevin Lavery, the Chief Executive of the ICB gave an upbeat presentation on the creation of the ICB. It had only been recently created on 1/7/22 to replace 8 constituent Clinical Commissioning Groups and had been given a planned deficit budget of £80,000,000 by the NHS. Mr. Lavery explained how he has already made savings through streamlining the administration and financial systems. He has also achieved some hospital waiting time reductions. The strategic aims of the ICB naturally include improving outcomes in healthcare and improving productivity, but also tackling local inequalities in provision across the area and supporting economic and social community development. Service reconfigurations are planned in a number of departments including vascular, head and neck, urology, cardiac, haematology, and gastroenterology. The Committee were pleased to hear of the ICB's latest role in NHS dentistry and suggested a future presentation on the challenges.

The Health Scrutiny Steering Group had met again. It had discussions on the use of agency staff and emphasised the need for more in-house training. The number of stroke units in Lancashire was reviewed, as were the thrombectomy services at Preston Hospital. The continuing conflict between the need to concentrate some services in specialist centres and the distances people had to travel to access them had been examined.