

Closer to Home: Response to Copeland Borough Council

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Recommendation: that the Committee consider the response by Cumbria Primary Care Trust to the Council's comments on the Closer to Home proposals.

BACKGROUND

The Committee will recall that at its meeting on 10 June 2008 the representative from Cumbria NHS Primary Care Trust stated that it was intended to provide a six month update on the progress of the 'Closer to Home' proposals.

A representative from Cumbria NHS Primary Care Trust will be attending the meeting to give a presentation on this update report.

COPELAND RESPONSE

The Council's recommendations to the consultation are highlighted below for information.

Recommendation: that Cumbria Primary Care Trust and Cumbria County Council Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee be advised that in respect of the "Closer to Home" Consultation proposals this Council considers that:

In respect of Introduction part of the consultation document - The Council would like to comment that it was generally disappointed in the consultation document itself, and were bemused how such a document could go out for consultation with the obvious lack of support from consultants, GP's and others.

The Council welcomed the time extension for the response but still feel there is inadequate information and detail to allow a full response to be made. The Council would therefore reserve the right at a further date to make further comments if and when information becomes available.

There will have been a lot of people and organisations responding to this consultation that deserve a response to their comments.

In respect of Change – The Council recognises that a change is needed but that change has to be in the best interests of this local community and we have yet to be convinced that this is what Closer to Homes will deliver,

In respect of Vision – The vision in principle is fine, but to deliver it will need the time, finances and support from a lot of organisations, and the Council is not convinced that this support is there at this time. The theory to deliver services closer to home is good but in Copeland this is rather more difficult considering we only have two community hospitals compared to the 10 in the rest of North Cumbria. It is also worth noting that accessibility is judged as an essential criteria, therefore this emphasises the need to keep hospital services in Copeland.

In respect of the consultation questions the Council has the following reservations in achieving the delivery of the proposals that it would wish to see addressed:

- (A) as the national evidence on the benefits of a specialised stroke unit is overwhelming the PCT is asked to confirm that the improvement in stroke care it recently announced includes:
 - 1) the retention of a specialised stroke unit at West Cumberland Hospital,
 - 2) whether this unit will be in its own ward or part of another ward,
 - 3) no reduction in the numbers of acute beds or rehabilitation beds in that unit, and
 - 4) the continuance of the necessary equipment and staff to support the rehabilitation of stroke victims at West Cumberland Hospital.
- (B) that the nationally recognised palliative care service unit remain at West Cumberland Hospital with at least the same number of beds that currently exist to enable members of the public to be able to choose to have their care at the Hospital if they so wish.
- (C) that Cumbria PCT and the North West Ambulance Services Trust agree on a service model that ensures that at least the same level of ambulance service is available under Closer to Home that currently exists, and
- (D) Cumbria PCT confirms that it will provide sufficient funding to ensure that the service model is maintained.
- (E) that the support of local GP's is crucial in ensuring the success of the Closer to Home and the PCT is urged to seek and resolve any necessary issues so that all GP's in Cumbria can support the proposals.

- (F) the PCT be thanked for agreeing to increase the proposed numbers of beds at West Cumberland Hospital to 220 with the possibility of increasing this to 250.
- (G) this Council supports the retention of the young disabled unit, the consultant led maternity unit and paediatrics and asks the PCT to publicly announce as soon as possible the proposed number of beds per service for all the services that will be provided at West Cumberland Hospital.
- (H) The PCT be requested to regularly review the number of beds and provide the Council with its analysis.
- (I) The Council through its Overview and Scrutiny Committee would wish to continue to monitor the progress and may ask the PCT to come to its meetings at appropriate times to explain the current position.
- (J) This council notes and strongly endorses the view of several Consultants at West Cumberland Hospital that the original wording of the consultation document as affecting major trauma - proposing that "major trauma services for the whole of North Cumbria to be located at the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle" was unworkable and unacceptable.

This council welcomes the fact that the Trusts have moved forward from that position and now recognise that patients with significant trauma would be taken to the nearest Emergency Treatment Centre for stabilisation. A clinical decision would then need to be made on the best approach and that a number of patients would require and receive immediate surgery at West Cumberland Hospital.

This council would like to see a clear statement of policy about the treatment of patients with significant trauma agreed between the trusts and the consultants as a matter of urgency and published.

- (K) This council remains concerned that the West Cumberland Hospital needs a base of support services such as pathology and microbiology if it is to provide the safe and sustainable care which patients need, and urges the trusts to continue to address this issue.
- (L) The development of community facilities and the necessary support infrastructure should be put into place before the reduction in acute beds is started. The Council would not look favourably at any reduction in service at West Cumberland Hospital without a sufficient level of service and care being available for the people of West Cumbria.
- (M) There is some concern over the funding of the community care proposals and what happens if the Community Venture Funding is not awarded.

- (N) The lack of a fall back position if the necessary savings are not achieved is also of concern particularly any affect on the proposed new build for the West Cumberland Hospital.
- (O) The PCT is urged to continue to listen to the concerns of the public as it develops its proposals and continues to be willing to change its proposals to reflect those concerns.
- (P) That Cumbria County Council carefully reassess the financial implications from the Closer to Home proposals as the increases in the early discharging of patients from hospitals could have profound effects on the social care service it provides. It will be very difficult to provide an acceptable level of service without additional funding or greater integration between health and social care.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents:

None