

County Councillor's Report – September 2016

It seems a long time since I last saw you all so I hope everyone had a good summer and enjoyed the sun.

Since August County Hall has been relatively quiet but normal service was resumed on 19th September and the members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – of whom I am one – were welcomed back by the protesters whom you may have seen on television that evening. From their reactions to our speakers – who included the Lead Chief Executive (Success Regime) and the Executive Lead from the NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, I think it fair to say that there were some aspects of the wider Devon 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' and the 'Success' regime (see newsletter forwarded with this report) with which they were less than impressed. In fact, the agenda recommendation did little more than ask members to note the consultation on the 'Your Future Care' model which is scheduled to commence on October 7th once authorisation from NHS England (which was due on the 20th September) has been received and the Clinical Commissioning Group has confirmed that the consultation may start. The recommendation, however, was not put* (see Appendix below) though it is expected that the results of the consultation will be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee early next year.

You may be aware that D.C.C. (Highways) has been out to tender with what is known as the 'Highways Term Maintenance Contract' which, currently being provided by S.W.H., is due to end on 31st March, 2017. In order to benefit from collaborative working, it was early decided to work in partnership with Plymouth City Council and Somerset County Council and the three councils chose to follow a procurement path known as 'Competitive Procedure with Negotiation' which is exactly what it says on the tin and enabled councils and tenderers to negotiate their way to a position on which the contract could be awarded – a process which proved beneficial in refining the contract and achieving best value. At Cabinet on 14th September it was agreed to award the contract to Skanska Construction UK Ltd., a branch of a Swedish company.

As part of its drive for continuing improvement, D.C.C. makes use of the 'Corporate Peer Challenge' offered by the Local Government Association, a process which involves a peer group of officers and members from similarly rural councils and from the L.G.A. itself meeting a range of people and groups connected with D.C.C. to explore specific themes. In this case, the work has been commissioned to inform the new 'transformation' programme to move the council on from the austerity of the last few years and will be looking at five main strands: broadly these are communities; leadership; partnerships and other stakeholders; finance and capacity. This is the first time I have been involved in a peer challenge at County and, in my role as vice chairman of Corporate Services Scrutiny, I met some of the members of the L.G.A. team on Wednesday, 28th September and again on 30th September for a feedback session. For those who are interested there is much more information at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/peerchallenge/>

Fifteen years ago the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site was brought into being by the snappily entitled United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (aka UNESCO). As co-sponsors of the bid for inscription, Devon and Dorset jointly accepted responsibility on behalf of the U.K. government for setting up the managing partnership required by UNESCO and, jointly funded by Devon, Dorset County Council hosts a small staff team which developed and now co-ordinates delivery of the management plan. It is proposed that the Jurassic Coast Trust – a registered charity within the partnership – should now take a more prominent leadership role as it is better placed to access additional resources, attract volunteers and recruit supporters than are the county councils.

*Appendix

The somewhat lengthier resolution which was moved instead by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's chairman was as follows:

- (a) that representations be sent to the Secretary of State for Health relaying this Committee's concerns about the 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' process and its funding;
- (b) that a task group be formed to examine the current N.H.S. formula funding for Devon and that Dr.Sarah Wollaston M.P. Chair of the House of Commons Select Committee (Health), be requested that the Select Committee also examine the funding formula and that she be invited to contribute to the task group;
- (c) that the 'Success Regime' be asked to submit a paper on all the consultation arrangements relating to the 'Your Future Care' model and in respect of the 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' (STP) processes and detailed proposals; and that progress be reported to the next meeting of this committee on 8th November, 2016 or to a special meeting as appropriate;
- (d) that the joint 'Spotlight Review' of the model of care for Torbay, Plymouth and Devon be arranged