

30 April, 2015

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 501 – 505

At a **SPECIAL COUNCIL** Meeting of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Tuesday, 30 April, 2015, at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Cllrs.

F. Akhtar	R. E. Evans
L. A. Beer	J. S. Phillips
D. M. Cundy	C. A. Rees
S. L. Davies	A. J. Rogers
H. J. Evans	W. V. Thomas

Absent:

L. J. Butler, S. M. Caiach, A. G. Morgan

501. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN PRO TEMPORE

RESOLVED that Cllr. W. V. Thomas be appointed Chairman pro tempore.

502. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. T. Bowen, M. V. Davies, T. Devichand, S. M. Donoghue, M. L. Evans, T. J. Jones, S. N. Lewis and G. H. Wooldridge.

503. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. S. L. Davies declared a personal interest in Minute No. 504, because of her involvement as a County Councillor in helping to secure a minibus for the Llanelli area to aid community transport.

**504. YOUR HEALTH YOUR FUTURE – PRINCE PHILIP HOSPITAL
PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Cllr. S. L. Davies declared a personal interest in the following item because of her involvement as a County Councillor in helping to secure a minibus for the Llanelli area to aid community transport.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Peter Llewellyn, Assistant Director of Strategic Partnerships and Mrs Sian-Marie James, Vice Chairman Hywel Dda University Health Board to discuss public transport issues affecting patients and their families when travelling to and from hospital.

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The representatives thanked the Council for the opportunity of addressing Members as transport was a recurring theme and would continue to be so. It was important to look at the links and networks being developed with public transport providers and also the current approach of mixed transport provision developed by the Health Board in partnership with other stakeholders.

Mr Llewellyn then referred to the two handouts he had prepared about the various transport initiatives in operation across the Health Board area. Copies of the handouts had been previously circulated to Members. He spoke about how some of the initiatives were having a positive impact on patient experience travelling to and from hospital. He referred to social care vehicle usage for non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) at Prince Philip (PPH) and Glangwili (GH) hospitals and how this was helping to reduce demand pressure for accessing transport. Three dedicated vehicles serviced PPH. The scheme was handling on average 75 patient journeys per month. This service was first introduced to support WAST to help meet the increased demand in getting patients to and from hospital. The service was administered and co-ordinated by the Ambulance Liaison Officer employed by WAST and working from PPH and GH. From 1 June, 2015, new booking arrangements for NEPT would be confirmed and shared with the public.

Prior to continuing to brief Members on the remainder of the transport initiatives, Mr Llewellyn referred to a forthcoming meeting he had organised with First Cymru – the bus operator for the area, to discuss public transport provision covering bus journeys and timetables to and from the hospital sites. The meeting had been arranged for Friday, 15 May, 2015, in Carmarthen and he duly invited the Clerk to attend and participate in the discussion. This offer was welcomed by Members.

Mr Llewellyn then referred to the joint promotion of a Dial a Ride service in Carmarthenshire that had been established with the Local Authority (Carmarthenshire County Council) with particular emphasis on the GP Practices in the Carmarthen, Llanelli, Burry Port and Kidwelly localities. He then referred to a positive development affecting PPH with the introduction of a late bus service departing the hospital at 8.05 pm. This was arranged with First Cymru to coincide with hospital evening visiting times which ran from 7.00 pm until 8.00 pm.

Mr Llewellyn confirmed that the Health Board was preparing information packs about transportation options promoting the Dial A Ride service and the free phone service for out of hours taxi services. The packs were to be made available in all hospital wards and at GP practices. He continued by stating the Health Board was working with the Local Authority over the Country Car Scheme with the scheme being adapted to take patients to hospital as well as collecting them from hospital. He referred to the pilot in Pembrokeshire. The initial evaluation had demonstrated value for money, enhanced patient experience whilst supporting demand on Ambulance Car Service locally. He maintained that in Carmarthenshire approximately 46,000 people received concessionary fare rates, which was good news. Having provided a general overview of the service arrangements, Mr Llewellyn then invited questions on aspects of the service.

The Chairman referred Members to the two handouts and during which Cllr. S. L. Davies declared a personal interest because of her involvement in helping secure a minibus for the Llanelli area to aid community transport. Cllr. Davies confirmed she would be attending the launch of the new service tomorrow at Parc Y Scarlets. Mr Llewellyn in reply commented about the initiative whereby two minibuses had been secured via lottery funding one each

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covering Carmarthen and Llanelli. The Dolen Teifi Community Transport Association was providing the minibus transport to support mental health patients from April 2015. This was also good news for the community.

Mr Llewellyn was then asked whether the dedicated discharge vehicle covered out of hours periods at the hospitals. He confirmed there were three vehicles on top of what the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) provided. They operated from Monday to Friday between 11.00 am to 7.00 pm. There was also another shift covering the early afternoon up until 8.00 pm. They dealt with transporting up to 200 patients per month from PPH to GH. At the weekend there was an emergency car vehicle to deal with patient flows of around 30 patients per week taking people from hospital to residential care homes as most of the patients were elderly. Members sought clarification as to what strategy was in place to cater for people being discharged from hospital from 8.00 pm onwards and during the unsocial hours of the early morning. In reply both representatives confirmed that people should not be discharged off the wards after 8.00 pm but recognised there were instances where an A&E category patient was dealt with differently depending on the circumstances associated with the admission. Mr Llewellyn confirmed a twilight service was available to cater for patients. The service was provided by Menter Cwm Gwendraeth up to 10.00 pm. He confirmed that a copy of the Twilight Service Annual Report for 2014/15 would be requested to demonstrate the current scope of the service at PPH. However, he went on to stress that vulnerable people were treated differently and were provided with transport home either via emergency vehicle or in a taxi (paid for by the Health Board). If a person was not classed as vulnerable then a free phone taxi service was available to transport people from the hospital. Mr Llewellyn confirmed that in light of Members' concerns he would share the out of hours transport procedure with the Council.

Mr Llewellyn was then presented with a scenario as to how a member of public would travel to GH from Bynea using public transport services. Mr Llewellyn confirmed the Health Board was looking to simplify the whole booking service. From 1 June, 2015, there would be two dedicated telephone numbers to contact. An ambulance car and a stretcher vehicle would be used. If these vehicles were unavailable and there was no public transport then the Country Car scheme service would be used instead. However, if the journey was for a social need then one of the telephone numbers would allow the person to plan the journey via assistance of support staff from the relatively new central transport centre unit based in Carmarthen. He confirmed 10% of the call traffic was based on satisfying social need purposes.

In response to a question about the staffing of discharge vehicles and whether the Health Board was satisfied with the service delivered by WAST; Mr Llewellyn confirmed that vehicles were staffed with trained ambulance crews and the Health Board had a service level agreement in place with WAST and was happy with the level of care and support being provided. However, given that some Members had enquired as to whether WAST had views or concerns of All Wales Ambulance Services he would look into this as a matter of course with WAST.

Members referred to instances where elderly people were paying expensive taxi fares to travel back to Llanelli from GH and felt the Health Board should communicate and provide more information on the good initiatives being developed and in order to raise public awareness. Mr Llewellyn confirmed the central transport centre unit was recently established in October 2014 and it was only now beginning to take a foothold but from 1 June, 2015, the unit would be staffed by four people and templates and travel plans would be developed using the dedicated telephone numbers. However, more work was needed to embed the service to cater for out of

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hours transport options. Planned care was more straightforward but the service for unscheduled care and A&E patients needed to match what was currently available for planned care so that eventually they would be identical. Mr Llewellyn recognised that there was an educational process to undertake with staff to make this happen but stated no person should be left or abandoned once discharged.

Members referred to anecdotal evidence of people encountering travel difficulties and felt that more publicity about transport options should be made available especially to the elderly. Mr Llewellyn concurred and referred to the monthly number of lost care journeys. A number of pre-arranged journeys to hospital had to be cancelled because of patient illness but in other instances people had forgotten about the arrangements and had made their own way to the hospital without first cancelling the pre-arranged transport. This was a huge waste on resources. It was suggested to Mr Llewellyn that the dedicated telephone numbers should be included on the hospital appointment for ease of reference because elderly people were forgetful and were easily confused. It was also suggested that the telephone numbers be handed out to Councillors so they could assist by raising awareness in the community. Mr Llewellyn confirmed that there would be more liaison with the primary care service and information packs would be sent to GP surgeries highlighting key contact numbers. This would be arranged from 1 June, 2015, and Councillors could also receive the same information.

Members were informed that the Health Board was still resolving mergers within the organisation with departments requiring new letter templates. There were currently 70 different letter templates in use but the Health Board's IT department was looking into how uniform information could be included on the templates going forward and whether the number of letter templates could be reduced. Mr Llewellyn referred to telephone numbers for the car schemes being included on outpatient letters but the trial proved unsuccessful. However, he did promise to revisit this idea with colleagues given that the Council had raised this point.

The Chairman then referred to the quality of some of the literature being produced, especially the Park and Ride leaflet (a copy of which was produced at the meeting). The copy quality was very poor and faint making it illegible. Mr Llewellyn agreed this needed addressing. He confirmed the Health Board was working with the Community Health Council to redesign the leaflets and the quality would be improved. The Chairman also referred to the importance attributed to managing and maintaining upto date information and links on the internet following a recent experience where a website link to help families plan journeys was still being displayed despite the service being closed last year.

Mr Llewellyn then responded to a question about advertising and transport arrangements covering the maternity unit. He referred to the Action for Children initiative currently operating in Pembrokeshire. It was likely that it would be rolled out across the Health Board area. The initiative was set up in community first areas in Pembrokeshire so Llanelli could possibly enjoy something similar given it also had a number of community first localities. The initiative looked to support vulnerable families who had difficulty getting to hospital. The scheme paid a retainer fee for 15 volunteer drivers who in turn would be paid a mileage rate when called upon to drive someone to and from hospital. The scheme was approved for Pembrokeshire and given its success the model could be expanded to cover support across the three counties. He confirmed that the outline of the transport proposal to support Woman and Children's Services would also be shared with the Council.

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Attention then turned to the First Cymru bus service and to the cuts in public transport subsidy. The cuts had impacted upon bus travel. Some service routes had ceased whereas others stopped after 6.30 pm. This compounded the problem and had a detrimental impact on travel plans to hospitals from certain areas. In regard to the free phone taxi service it was claimed that the taxi company had not been seen collecting patients in Llanelli. The viability of having a Carmarthen town based taxi company travelling to Llanelli and in turn picking up patients from PPH to take them to locations around Llanelli was put to Mr Llewellyn. It was felt the arrangement was uneconomic. Mr Llewellyn confirmed the current contract in place for PPH was with Chris Cars Ltd which also provided the service to GH. The service was available 24/7 and was available to respond to both hospitals and public requests. The current contract was in place for three years commencing from July 2014. Mr Llewellyn would make enquiries over the contracted taxi presence in Llanelli as part of the contract review process. However, with regard to arrangements made with First Cymru the bus operator, discussions and plans were evaluated based on a commercial basis. He also confirmed the Health Board was using a lot less taxis than it had ever done.

Mr Llewellyn then answered some general points concerning budget provision and affordability. He confirmed arrangements were sustainable. The revised transport provision was also taking pressure off WAST. He indicated that he would also analyse Accident and Emergency data highlighting any late discharges from GH back to Llanelli. This could be accommodated by examining postcodes to assess the extent of patient discharge after the twilight service had ended. In response to a question about WAST and paramedics, Members were informed that in some instances paramedics had been able to treat patients at the scene of a call without the need to transfer to hospital. Furthermore, and in support of the general working relationship with WAST, the Health Board produced a three year budget plan. The transport support from WAST was agreed and assessed as part of an impact assessment when formulating the budget.

Members in reference to earlier comments about vulnerable people being admitted to A&E asked what information was provided to the clinicians to allow them to approve release from hospital during unsocial hours. Mr Llewellyn confirmed that in some instances patients were released but releases were based on clinical judgements and a distinction was made between a vulnerable person and someone just causing a nuisance because for example they'd had too much alcohol. He repeated vulnerable people would always be provided with transport home. However, a person who was not vulnerable and was just drunk would be monitored by the Alcohol Liaison Nurse in the first instance before being discharged. He confirmed the role of the nurse would be shared with Councillors.

In closing the debate Members thanked the Health Board representatives for attending the meeting and repeated requests to receive the key contact information when available. The Chairman prior to closing the debate thereupon asked Mrs James for a brief update on the Front of House Project at PPH and the progress in making its business plan case to Welsh Government.

Mrs James confirmed arrangements were progressing well. Mr Paul Hawkins, the Chief Operation Officer (overseeing implementation) took part in a guided tour of PPH last week. He walked the hospital with Mrs James and the clinicians heading up the various work streams to discuss the new design layout and to assess how the reconfiguration plans would look. Members were informed that Welsh government had advised the Health Board over its capital submission explaining the process for raising the necessary funds to support the business plan.

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The advice was very positive and Mrs James revealed that capital funding from this year's budget had been identified to offset some of the work. She confirmed the work was definitely going ahead and had been included in the Health Board's three year plan and both the new Health Board Chief Executive and Chairman fully supported the plans and it was

RESOLVED that:

1. The information be noted.
2. The invitation received for the Clerk to participate in the forthcoming transport meeting between the Health Board and First Cymru (bus operator) be accepted with thanks.

Cllr. J. S. Phillips left the meeting.

505. CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING

Members received a letter from the Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer, Carmarthenshire County Council, inviting Town and Community Council representatives to attend one of the Code of Conduct Training sessions to be held on 4 and 9 June, 2015, at County Hall, Carmarthen and it was

RESOLVED that:

1. The letter shall be recirculated to all Members for attention and that the Clerk and interested Members shall attend the training session to be held on 4 June, 2015; and
2. a letter be sent to the Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer, Carmarthenshire County Council enquiring if the County Council could also hold a separate training session for the Council on the Code of Conduct at the Council offices at Vauxhall Buildings, Llanelli.

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The Meeting concluded at 7.00 p.m.

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The afore-mentioned Minutes were declared to be a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman presiding thereat and were, on 12 May, 2015, adopted by the Council.