worcestershire
c o u n t y c o u n c i l

AGENDA ITEM 5

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
18 May 2016

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO HOSPITAL

Summary

1.   The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel is to consider plans for transport and access to Worcestershire's hospitals, as part of the Programme to review the future of acute hospital services in Worcestershire.

2.   Representatives have been invited from the 'Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire (FoAHSW) Programme and the Council's transport commissioning team.

Background

3.   Access and transport to hospitals in Worcestershire is a necessary part of the on-going review of acute hospital services in Worcestershire – which is called the Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire (FoAHSW) Programme.

4.   Initiated in 2012, the review programme was prompted by a number of needs, including national evidence that certain services can be provided to a higher standard if they are centralized, a lack of doctors specializing in certain services and the increasing challenge of meeting the needs to an ageing population with more complex and long-term conditions.

5.   Now in its final stages, part of the proposed model of care involves centralising some services at Worcestershire Royal Hospital and providing more planned care at the Alexandra Hospital, which will lead to more patients and their carers travelling to Worcester and Redditch for some aspects of care – and a consequential need for more transport and access facilities such as public transport and parking. The plans do not affect outpatient appointments or diagnostic tests and 95% of patients will continue to receive their treatment at the same hospital as they do now.

6.   The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) has raised the need for consideration of transport and access planning, and has asked the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel to look further at plans to address the issues involved. HOSC Members have also been invited to attend, and the Vice-Chair of this Panel is a member of both scrutiny bodies.

7.   Reconfiguration plans for Worcestershire's acute hospital services sit with Worcestershire's NHS commissioners, however plans to address hospital access and transport will involve partnership working, including with Worcestershire County Council, which is responsible for transport planning.

Hospital Access and Transport Planning

8.   In order to be in a position to assess transport issues arising from the proposed re-configuration of acute hospital services in Worcestershire, an independent report was commissioned from Mott MacDonald. The Integrated Impact assessment and pre-engagement consultation meetings carried out by Mott MacDonald clearly demonstrated that transport and accessibility issues are of particular concern to stakeholders, in particular for vulnerable groups.

9. Subsequently, the FoAHSW Programme Board established a Transport Task and Finish group in November 2014, to explore how issues relating to transport arising from the proposed re-configuration of acute hospital services in Worcestershire could be mitigated.

10. The role of the group was therefore to:

- Explore transport issues arising from the proposed reconfiguration;
- Consider the mitigations proposed by Mott MacDonald and make a formal recommendation to the Programme Board on actions to be taken;
- Recommend how issues around transport and accessibility should be approached during the public consultation.

11. The Task Group report has now been considered by the FoAHSW Programme Board, and a further report by the Board sets out its recommendations to address the needs identified.

12. It is important to note that the Group could only look at how the FOAHSW proposals would affect transport in the county and not transport issues as a whole. The Panel will be aware that transport planning is a county council responsibility – therefore the work to respond to the recommendations for hospital transport and access will involve partnership working.

13. The Summary points and recommendations from the Task Group's report and the FoAHSW Programme Board's response and recommendations will be presented at the meeting. A copy of both documents is attached at appendices 1 and 2.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. The Integrated Impact assessment by Mott MacDonald found that some issues had the potential to impact disproportionately on some 'protected' and vulnerable groups.

Purpose of the Meeting

15. Following the discussion, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to:
- agree any further information required
- agree any comments to inform the Council's health scrutiny function in its ongoing scrutiny of plans for reconfiguration of hospital services
- agree any comments to be passed to the Cabinet Member for Highways.

16. In doing so, Panel Members are referred to the following issues from earlier scrutiny discussions:
- the need to consider access to hospitals across Worcestershire (not just from Redditch areas to Worcestershire Royal Hospital)
- how to mitigate the impact on more vulnerable groups
- use of community transport
- co-ordination of planning between partners involved
- communication plans
- how access and transport will be monitored?

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Report of the Transport Group

Appendix 2 - Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire Programme Board response to the Final Transport Report

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of the:
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board
- Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel