

COUNTY COUNCIL – 20 MARCH 2018

WRITTEN QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.2

1. Question from Councillor Sandra Crawford

During the Adults Committee Meeting of the 8th March I asked the Chair Councillor Bailey and the officers present why the members of the Adult leads and members of the Committee had not been briefed on the reports in the Local Government Chronicle and the HSJ, and various newspapers regarding a scheme to move hospital patients into people's private homes for respite care. I also asked why it was not on any future agendas. The Company Care BnB, which is run by the Chief Executive Paul Gaudin, co-ordinates respite care in people's private homes. Private householders can earn £1000.00 per month looking after patients who need extra care when they leave hospital.

I was told by the Chair of the Adults Committee that Cambridgeshire County Council were not at present considering this scheme as a pilot and that is why there had been no briefings. Councillor Harrison made it clear to me that "I should not jump to conclusions" about the scheme, as it had many merits and was needed in times when we were having difficulties with delayed transfers of care, and that she knew Paul Gaudin and supported the idea.

It states in the Local Government Chronicle that Paul Gaudin's Company is

"now establishing a working group with Cambridgeshire County Council and has begun advertising for host households in the County, which includes the East Cambridgeshire constituency of junior health minister Stephen Barclay. The Conservative controlled council confirmed the new group would meet for the first time imminently to discuss the innovative Care Rooms concept. Councillor Bailey told the HSJ the make-up of the Group and chair was still being confirmed, but it would include a senior adult social care council officers, council commissioners and front line social care and NHS representation."

1. Why is there a lack of transparency and absence of due process leading to the establishment of a joint Care BnB and County Council working group, which should have been the subject of an open well documented report to the Adults Committee seeking approval?
2. Due to the lack of due process at committee level, the following question needs to be asked:- Is due diligence being followed as to the risks to patients coming out of hospital i.e. is the council taking note of reports from Essex County Council, who have dropped this pilot scheme due to what they called "safeguarding concerns about care being provided by non-care professionals." Adult social care directors are reported as expressing considerable concern about the initiative and the risk to effective safeguarding of vulnerable patients / service users it represents. Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has no intention of taking part in the pilot saying that it "would compromise the safety and quality of care of its patients and was a huge and risky venture."

3. Why is there no involvement in the proposed working group of the Clinical Commissioning Group and relevant NHS provide trusts as we are talking here about effective discharge of hospital patients towards whom the NHS has a duty of care as well as the County Council.

Response from Councillor Anna Bailey
Chairman of Adults Committee

1. The decision to provide Care Rooms with information and insight into the system in Cambridgeshire falls within the ordinary business of the Council as the local authority has a statutory duty to manage the care market. As the information given to Care Rooms did not represent a change of Council Policy or commit the Council to significant expenditure there is not a requirement to present it to Committee. While at some point, it may be helpful to provide the Committee with information on the Council's involvement, our contact with Care Rooms is very much at an early stage. I can confirm that the County Council has not made a decision to enter into a partnership with Care Rooms. Rather, Cambridgeshire County Council is interested in exploring a range of approaches in terms of the most effective way to promote independent living in the community, both for those who we support and those who fund their own care. Within this context, the Council was approached by CareRooms Chief Executive Paul Gaudin. We have had initial discussions with him about his ideas of delivering home based services, as an alternative to traditional short-term institutional settings, such as care homes or hospitals. The model is at an early stage of development and the Council along with other national and local organisations has offered information and insight into the health and social care landscape. I can confirm that there are no immediate plans for the Council to commission any services from or enter into any partnership with Care Rooms.
2. As indicated in response to the previous question, as this matter falls within the ordinary business of the Council and within the Council's statutory responsibilities, it is clear that there has been no breach of "due process". I can confirm that the Council has not made any decision in relation to entering into a working arrangement with Care Rooms.
3. An initial meeting has taken place between Care Rooms and selected Adult Social Care staff employed by the County Council. Additionally, communication has taken place with the NHS in the form of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust, concerning the addition of a community nurse to the working group. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust are receptive to this proposal and are considering the most appropriate representation.

2. Question from Councillor Jocelynne Scutt

Residents of Arbury Division are concerned about the company arrangements and financial dealings in relation to Milton Road Library and generally. Please advise:

The precise status of This Land Ltd, the company now existing in place of Cambridgeshire Housing & Investments Company (CH&IC) as to:

The directors and, where any director is not an employee of the County Council:

- 1) the full qualifications of that individual to be a director of CH&IC and thence This Land Ltd and upon which the decision was made to appoint him a director;
- 2) by whom the decision was made to appoint him a director;
- 3) what if any payment is being made to him whether by the County Council or This Land Ltd or any other source to him as a director;
- 4) what supervision or other mechanism is being employed to ensure he is operating within the requirements of the County Council as the owner of This Land Ltd;
- 5) for how many other companies, if any, he works and where he is based.

Why it was considered necessary to change the name of the company CH&IC to This Land Ltd and:

- a) how it was determined and who determined upon the name This Land Ltd;
- b) the precise cost of change of name (registered on or about 14 February);
- c) the precise of cost of listing new companies related to This Land Ltd and what is the purpose of each;
- d) the cost of the glossy brochure that has been issued in the name This Land Ltd and its purpose.

Who is or are shareholders in the company This Land Ltd and each of the other companies listed (on or about 15 and 16 February 2018).

Specifically as to Milton Road Library:

- i. Who and how was it decided that the freehold of Milton Road Library site would pass to This Land Ltd;
- ii. What is the sum that is to be paid to the County Council for the freehold transfer to This Land and has it been paid in full or if not how is it to be paid and what is the timing;
- iii. What is the intention as to the seven (7) flats to be built on Milton Road Library site – that is, are they to be retained by This Land Ltd to provide an income stream to the County Council or are they to be sold or subject to long-leases and, if so, who has made or will make that decision;
- iv. If the flats are to be sold or subject to long-leases how will the sale or long-lease price be set.

Generally:

- A. How and by what process does the Council make decisions to set up companies relating to its functions and assets;
- B. How are probity and due diligence ensured and assured;
- C. Does the Chair intend to bring forward proposals to improve transparency and rigour of those decisions, and if not, why not.

Response from Councillor Josh Schumann
Chairman of Commercial and Investment Committee

Chairman as Councillor Scutt has asked a number of questions that require detailed and technical responses I would simply like to respond now by saying that a briefing note regarding This Land will be circulated to all members. This will include information which will hopefully answer the questions raised by Councillor Scutt, in addition to this a members seminar can be scheduled to provide further information - It is worth noting that some parts of Councillor Scutt questions would need to be answered in a confidential setting and therefore would not be able to be disclosed during this public meeting.

With regards to the decision to sell Milton Road library to This Land, the decision was taken by the Commercial and Investment committee and went through the same process that all other sites have been through. As the committee agreed this transaction any questions regarding the details about the sites development should be asked of This Land.

Councillor Scutt's final questions can largely be answered by looking through the reports presented to the Commercial and Investments committee, and formerly the Assets and investment committee, in which the process and decision to establish the development company have been well recorded. I cannot agree with the insinuation that the process has not been fully transparent and would suggest that Councillor Scutt, or other members of Councillor Scutt's party, engage more fully with the numerous workshops and meetings that we have previously and continue to hold in order to better understand our decisions.'

3. Question from Councillor Susan van de Ven

The Combined Authority Strategic Bus Review paper considered in November 2017 states that: *'Buses provide vital services to our communities. They have the potential to provide economic and social benefits by connecting people with jobs, shops and facilities; they can minimise social isolation; and can reduce congestion on some of our busiest roads.'* Given the desperate state of financing lifeline transport especially in rural communities, and Cambridgeshire County Council's current caretaker role in managing key bus subsidies, it is concerning that four months on the Strategic Bus Review has yet to commence. Therefore, please can the Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee explain what steps are being considered to protect Cambridgeshire residents from isolation when the current round of subsidies expires, given the possibility that the council's caretaker role could continue beyond next financial year.

Response from Councillor Ian Bates
Chairman of Economy and Environment Committee

The Strategic Bus Review is an important and complex piece of work, and the Combined Authority is keen to ensure that the scope of works is robust and will deliver what is needed. Due to the sensitivity of this study and the importance to securing the right consultancy support, the Combined Authority has been engaging with other authorities who have undertaken similar work. As a result of this advice the Combined Authority has re-assessed its procurement approach which has, unfortunately, led to a delay in starting this study. The documentation necessary to support this new procurement approach will soon be finalised and it is anticipated that formal procurement will commence before the end of the month.

Our position is quite clear. Where the Council has agreed to subsidise bus services, it has been agreed that this will continue until April 2019. Beyond that point we expect the Combined Authority to take over responsibility for funding bus services, indeed the delegation of this responsibility to the County Council is only for the 2018/19 financial year.

The Council is very mindful of the impact of any withdrawal of subsidised bus services on our communities, and until the Combined Authority assumes responsibility for funding subsidised bus services, we will work positively with them to ensure that communities are not left 'high and dry', and that services continue seamlessly where they are needed.

4. Question from Councillor Lorna Dupre

"What practical response is the County Council as lead local flood authority making to the Great Ouse Tidal River Baseline Report of July 2017, which demonstrates that around £100M of 'partnership funding' – over and above any funding available from central government – will be required to manage future flood risks related to the Great Ouse Tidal River System? What action is it taking to seek to protect current and planned infrastructure in the affected zones, including but not only the A1101, A1123, A142, A10, A47, and to work with partner agencies and landowners to protect current and future investment in railway lines, sewage treatment works, electricity pylons, as well as over 20,000 hectares of agricultural land and around 1,000 residential properties?"

Response from Councillor Ian Bates **Chairman of Economy and Environment Committee**

Thank you Cllr Dupre for this question.

When the publication of the Great Ouse Tidal River Baseline Report took place, this was presented to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) on which my colleagues Cllr Wotherspoon and Cllr Smith sit. The report highlights the importance of this catchment and sets out some important messages for the future of flood risk management. The County Council supports the work and, through its role on the RFCC, will work collaboratively with the Environment Agency and Cambridgeshire's Internal Drainage Boards to develop and review management options going forward.

It is clear also that the situation described in this report is not unique to just the Great Ouse Tidal River catchment and the need for a much longer term partnership approach to asset management in the whole of the Fens area is needed. The Environment Agency has therefore proposed a three-phase partnership project to enable a holistic review and options development process for the future of flood risk management in the Fens. The three phases will be as follows:

1. Data gathering leading to a collective understanding of the situation. This initial stage, starting now, is crucial because flood risk management in the Fens is currently undertaken by a large number of different organisations. All of the different approaches, data, flood models and asset investment plans need to be collated.
2. Partnership development of high level action plan to strategically review future options for managing flood risk
3. Development of phased action plan to implement the preferred options

This is a long-term project and estimated timescales to deliver the first two phases is 7 years. The council is supportive of this work and as the project develops will take a key role in the steering group to ensure that any future options seek the best for Cambridgeshire. The council will also ensure the Combined Authority is kept abreast of the project's relevance in protecting the county's communities and infrastructure.

A member briefing seminar is being organised by our officers and the Environment Agency and the date will be confirmed shortly. As part of the project, the RFCC is keen to ensure good engagement with all stakeholders so we would very much encourage you to come along to this session where more detailed questions can be answered.