

CORPORATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 May 2017 at 6.00pm at the Council House, Walsall

Panel Members Present	Councillor A. Andrew (Chair) Councillor D. Barker Councillor M. Bird Councillor S. Craddock Councillor L. Rattigan Councillor G. Sohal Councillor M. Ward
Portfolio Holder	Councillor L. Jeavons – Deputy Leader Councillor C. Jones – Clean and Green Councillor I. Shires – Agenda for Change
Officers Present	Simon Neilson – Executive Director (Regeneration) Julie Alderson - Executive Director (Change and Governance) Simon Tranter - Head of Regeneration & Development Gary Mack - Group Manager – Learning Disabilities Martin Thom - Head of Community Care (Partnerships) Craig Goodall – Senior Democratic Services Officer

183/17 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

184/17 Substitutions

There were no substitutions.

185/17 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

186/17 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to consider in private session.

187/17 Call-in of Cabinet decision – Broadway North Home

The Committee considered a call-in of the Cabinet decision, made on 25 April 2017, to declare the Broadway North Home surplus to requirements. The reason for the call-in was: *'Valuable asset to community not surplus to requirements until we have a future plan'*. A copy of the call-in notice, Cabinet decision and report were included in the papers sent to Members (annexed).

As part of their considerations the Committee heard representations from the Members who called the decision in, Park Hall Community Association, mental health service users, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Agenda for Change.

The call-in Members spoke first and highlighted the following issues:

- The impact the loss of Park Hall Community Association (PHCA) would have on the local area, including Chuckery which was deprived.
- Paddock ward has high levels of elderly residents. These residents benefit from the services provided by PHCA. PHCA had 16,000-18,000 users. The loss of these services could affect the social wellbeing of the area and create additional pressures on the Councils adult social care budget due to increased social isolation. PHCA may not pay rent but the services they provided to local people had a high social value.
- Alternative locations for PHCA had been considered but it had not yet been possible to identify a viable alternative.
- The site was, in their opinion, a good location for the proposed new medical facility required by the merger of 4 local GP practices. In particular they felt it was a better and more accessible site than the currently proposed Jabez Cliff site.
- The vacant Mali Jenkins care home could be used as a reablement and respite centre to reduce pressure on local hospitals.
- That it was possible there was a covenant on the land for it to be maintained for public use.
- The Cabinet report did not, in their view, adequately explore alternative options for the site. The site could be remodelled as a multi-purpose health centre with consulting rooms leased to local health providers and consultants. Step down beds to support discharges from the Manor Hospital could also be introduced. This income from these facilities would benefit the Council and PHCA could maintain its presence at the site.
- The Recovery College provided a vital service to local people.
- That the sale of Broadway North was being accelerated at the expense of other sites.

The Committee heard representations from Steve Cook, Chair PHCA, Terry Simmonds, Secretary PHCA and Barbara McCracken, PHCA. All spoke in support of the activities undertaken by PHCA and the benefits this provided to the local community. It was stated that if long term security of tenure could be provided then it would be possible for PHCA to increase its programme of community activities. As a third sector organisation it believed it provided excellent value for money and could deliver services at more competitive rates than the Council. The site was registered as an asset of community value.

The Committee moved on to hear representations from a former mental health service user. She explained how support from the services currently located at Broadway North had helped her during a time of extreme personal crisis. She felt it was important that these services were maintained at the site to support other local people who may become vulnerable.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration responded to the call-in. He reported that the cessation of funding to the Broadway North Recovery College had been consulted upon as part of the budget setting process and decided upon in February 2017. He explained that with these services withdrawn the activity on the site would reduce to the point it could be considered surplus to Council requirements, and as portfolio holder with asset management responsibility this fell in his portfolio.

With reference to a point made about covenants he explained that the Council in fact bought the site in 1950 for £6,250 for operational purposes. Contrary to perception, the only covenant placed on the land were restrictions on the sale of alcohol.

With regard to the site becoming the location of a new GP surgery he noted that no formal expressions of interest in the site from GPs had been received.

He confirmed the asset of community value registration on the site and that a moratorium process would be required for expressions of interest in the site from community groups before marketing and sale of the site could take place. He also reported that officers had been instructed to work with PHCA to consider viable alternative locations for the organisation. The Council would be required to demonstrate that the disposal of the site represented best consideration as required under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

He went on to note that it was required to realise the value of assets owned by the authority to use the returns to fund other projects.

He noted the suggestions for future uses of the site but explained it was difficult to consider these fully until such time as the Council declared the site surplus to requirements. Regarding the use of the site for a new GP practice a member of the Committee referred to a meeting with the CGG that indicated the site did not meet the required criteria and was not favoured by a local surgery whose consent was needed for the relocation.

The Committee discussed the proposed new locality model. In response to a question the Portfolio Holder (Agenda for Change) explained that, if introduced, the locality model would develop and embed over the first 12 months. As the locality model wished to develop the way the council and its partners worked with the local voluntary and community sector some Members of the Committee argued that the sale of Broadway North site should at least be delayed to allow for PHCA to play a role for its locality during the early implementation of the new model.

Following the debate it was **moved** by Councillor Bird and duly **seconded** by Councillor Craddock that:

The Committee request that Cabinet rescind its decision to declare the Broadway North site as surplus to requirements and:

- *Explore the possibility of utilising the first floor for alternative uses such as step down beds for the Manor Hospital;*
- *Explore the possibilities of utilising the rooms for consultants from the Manor and Little Aston Hospitals;*
- *Explore the use of rooms within the buildings for opticians, chiropodists, dental practices, hearing consultants and other community medical facilities;*

All of which would provide a substantial income for Walsall Council and secure the facilities that Park Hall Community Association delivers.

If all of the above fails then Cabinet should:

- *explore the relocation of Park Hall Community Association to an alternative site;*
- *delay any disposal of this site for a period of one year to allow the relocation of Park Hall Community Association to be fully explored and for the Localities policy to be developed.*

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

Resolved:

The Committee request that Cabinet rescind its decision to declare the Broadway North site as surplus to requirements and:

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- **Explore the possibilities of utilising the rooms for consultants from the Manor and Little Aston Hospitals;**

- Explore the use of rooms within the buildings for opticians, chiropodists, dental practices, hearing consultants and other community medical facilities;

All of which would provide a substantial income for Walsall Council and secure the facilities that Park Hall Community Association delivers.

If all of the above fails then Cabinet should:

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188/17 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be agreed by Annual Council in May.

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.33 pm.

Signed:

Date: