

Leader's Statement to Full Council – Wednesday 10 October 2018

LEP review

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are a core component of the Government's plan for driving local economic growth. To strengthen the LEPs in preparation for their role in developing Local Industrial Strategies, the Government commenced a review of LEPs in August 2017.

In July 2018, the Government published their report '*Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnership*'. This report sets out the conclusions of the Government's review. They include a series of Government commitments alongside several reforms to leadership, governance, accountability, and financial reporting that the Government will work with LEPs to implement before April 2019.

The Government asked LEPs and local stakeholders to come forward with considered proposals for LEPs' geographical boundaries by 28 September 2018.

I submitted a response on behalf of the Council, stating its position – that leaders and our private sector partners in Kent and Medway want to maintain the current LEP geography and devolved structure.

We are totally opposed to the proposed changes of the constitution of the Board (a total of 20 people half from private sector) as it will lead to the elimination of district councils which we believe play the lead part in economic regeneration.

We await a response.

Homelessness

The Homeless Reduction Act came into force in April 2018. Whilst the Housing Options team has been preparing for this, there has been an impact. Appointments are up 15% and the time taken to assess applications has doubled on average. Households in TA have increased from 150 to 186. This is resulting in increased cost to the council. This is compounded by the fact that there is also a lack of move on accommodation and the number of affordable social homes is decreasing. Also, the local market rent is significantly higher than the benefit housing allowance, making properties unaffordable for many on low incomes.

As a result, we are looking at ways to continue to address these issues. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities wrote to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out our concerns over the Act. As a result, Swale was visited by one of his advisors in September. This proved to be extremely helpful in confirming that our thinking and approach was on the right track. This includes relaunching the landlord incentive scheme, strengthening our

agreements with Social Landlords and changes to the nominations policy. We have also commissioned an external review of the Housing Team to ensure that we have responded to the new legislation appropriately and to suggest any further improvements.

Preferred option for the location of hyper acute stroke units (HASU) in Kent

Kent and Medway NHS have identified the preferred option for the configuration of stroke services to provide three hyper acute stroke units (HASUs) at Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford, Maidstone Hospital, and the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford.

The preferred option was chosen at an evaluation workshop made up of representatives from all GPs and commissioners from across Kent, Medway, East Sussex and South East London, local councillors and patient representatives. The Committee were satisfied that the consultation did not identify any new options, although it did highlight important issues that will be noted for consideration during the implementation phase, including concern about travel times, accessibility for relatives and carers visiting loved ones, effective rehabilitation close to home and the ability to staff the new units.

This is ***not the final decision***. The chosen option is now subject to an assurance process to develop a 'decision-making business case' (DMBC), that will be subject to review by the South East Clinical Senate and the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and assured by NHS England and NHS Improvement. A final decision is due in December 2018/January 2019, with the final implementation occurring in the months following the decision.

Although Medway Maritime Hospital has not been included as one of the chosen hospitals to provide a HASU; it will continue to build on improvements already made to the care of stroke patients, such as receiving clot-busting thrombolysis drugs more quickly, and with access to consultants on a rota 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Canterbury likewise has not been included at this point. It is however hoped that with the proposed developments at and around the current Canterbury site, not least the new medical school, that this question can be revisited in the not too distant future.

Further work will also continue on the provision of good quality, localised and well-resourced rehabilitation services. NHS leaders, along with stroke specialists, are currently working to ensure that effective local rehabilitation services are in place at the same time as final changes are made to urgent stroke services.

Revised Senior Management Structure

Members will have received the Chief Executive's email regarding the revised senior management structure of the authority. I know that he has reviewed this to provide a more logical grouping of services, to reflect that his former role no longer exists and to ensure that the structure is fit for the future. I wanted to say that I am particularly pleased that in doing so that we have been able to provide further opportunities for developing some of our highly valued staff and I wanted to welcome the newest members of the senior management team and wish them every success in their new roles. I am confident that we now have an excellent team to help, advise and support Members to achieve the council's priorities.

Cllr Andrew Bowles
Leader