

Item 8 – Buckland Hospital and Health Services in Dover

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this issue during their meeting of 9 May 2008.

The Committee's decision was as follows:-

RESOLVED unanimously, on the motion of Dr Robinson, seconded by Mr Marsh, that:-

The Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee of KCC strongly recommend & support E K Hospitals Trust working closely with the ECK PCT & Dover District Council to locate a central site in Dover for the Community Hospital Services for the population of Dover & the surrounding areas.

This proposal to be delivered to the EKHT by the end of August 2008. This third option to be considered & evaluated alongside options 1 & 2 concerning the Buckland Hospital Site.

As a result of examining the issue again during this meeting, the Committee is asked to consider how best to take this resolution forward in the context of the latest developments.

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Briefing Note

Background and development of the latest proposals

- The Dover Project – During 2006, the former East Kent Coastal PCT and East Kent Hospitals Trust undertook stakeholder and public consultations about possible models of health and social care service delivery in Dover. The NHS OSC considered this consultation on four occasions through 2006 and early 2007, and Members were unanimously supportive of the way that The Dover Project was being carried out. The consultation was not directly concerned with the future of Buckland Hospital.
- East Kent Neuro-rehabilitation Unit – This unit was set up at Buckland in 2001 as a temporary expedient and a “focussed discussion” in early 2007 led to the decision to relocate this Unit to Kent and Canterbury Hospital during 2008.
- Inpatient Wards for Older People – Buckland Hospital’s inpatient wards for older people were due to close by the end of October 2007. The wards were regarded as not fit for providing modern standards of care and had been superseded by community-based forms of intermediate care in the area.
- Service Delivery Options – On 16 May 2007 the PCT Board approved a paper setting out emerging service delivery options that stemmed from The Dover Project. Amongst the key principles determined was a decision to ensure that appropriate local services are developed in Dover and a clear vision for the Buckland Hospital site worked out.
- Buckland Hospital Steering Group – This was then set up and met every two months under the chairmanship of Howard Jones, Facilities Director of East Kent Hospitals Trust. It was decided that services could not be continued indefinitely at the Buckland site due to the age and quality of the buildings, and that any decision on the reconfiguration of services would be taken in the context of “Dover Pride”, which is looking to regenerate the area in the wider sense.
- PPIF Referral to HOSC – The former Eastern and Coastal Kent Patient and Public Involvement Forum drafted a document expressing concern with the future of health services in Dover. The PPIF was not satisfied with the responses of the PCT and agreed on 31 January 2008 to refer the issue to the HOSC. The PPIF was abolished, along with all others, at the end of March 2008.
- The Trust’s Proposals – The Trust put forward two options which would be developed into full business cases:
 - 1) to refurbish part of Buckland Hospital, so that the facilities are fit for purpose – this would mean an investment of just over £8 million;
 - 2) to provide a new building on the Buckland site, at a cost of around £11 million.

(Further options, including a town centre site and one at Whitfield have subsequently been proposed – see overleaf).

- Other Options – The following resolution was passed by the HOSC during their meeting of 9 May 2008:

The Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee of KCC strongly recommend & support E K Hospitals Trust working closely with the ECK PCT & Dover District Council to locate a central site in Dover for the Community Hospital Services for the population of Dover & the surrounding areas.

This proposal to be delivered to the EKHT by the end of August 2008. This third option to be considered & evaluated alongside options 1 & 2 concerning the Buckland Hospital Site.

- Dover Council – In June 2008, Dover District Council's Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee produced a report entitled "Review of Future Health Service Provision in Dover". One of the key recommendations of the report, subsequently adopted by the Cabinet of Dover District Council, was "That the Cabinet work closely with the Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust and the East Kent Hospitals Trust to locate a central and accessible site in Dover for Community Hospital Services for the population of Dover and the surrounding areas."

The full report is available on request (recommendations attached).

- Local Commissioning – The Dover and Aylesham Practice-Based Commissioning Consortium produced a report to go before the Board of the Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT on 16 July 2008. The commissioning intentions included the relocations of certain outpatient appointments back to Dover, improved transportation/infrastructure, "increased collaboration across local services (e.g. social and healthcare)", and "central Dover facility to act as a 'focal point' bringing together local services." Work on achieving some of the goals set out in the PBC Commissioning Intentions can begin before the opening of a new Dover Hospital.

The PBC Commissioning Intentions are available on request.

- Latest Developments – There has been a lot of discussion in the local media about the proposals. Some individuals and groups are keen to secure a community hospital as a matter of urgency, whilst others have pushed for a full district general hospital, possibly at a site at Whitfield. A stakeholder/public meeting was held at Dover Town Hall on 14 August 2008 to discuss the latest developments. Feasibility work for the Whitfield site option is now also being undertaken by the PCT in advance of their Board Meeting on 17 September.

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