

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR PRIMARY CARE SERVICES
IN LITTLE PAXTON
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of the Cabinet consultations being carried out by Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust on the future provision of primary care services to the residents of Little Paxton.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Until November 2003, primary care facilities in Little Paxton were provided by a single General Practitioner at a surgery in the village. Between November 2003 and January 2004, the service was provided from the latter surgery by the PCT. In January 2004, the Great Staughton medical practice was appointed to provide primary care services from the surgery in Little Paxton. These arrangements continue, but since the former GP formally resigned in May 2004, the PCT has been consulting on the provision of primary care services in Little Paxton.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Owing to public concern at the actions of the PCT an initial consultation exercise was abandoned to be replaced by a more extensive process. A copy of the consultation document published by the PCT is attached as Appendix A.
- 3.2 The options subject to consultation are:
- 1) Establishing a new GP practice in the village;
 - 2) Opening a branch surgery in the village run from a larger practice based elsewhere; and
 - 3) Inviting people who are currently registered with the surgery in Little Paxton to register with practices in neighbouring villages, St Neots or another area of their choice.
- 3.3 Concern at the way the initial consultation exercise was carried out and the potential loss of a surgery in Little Paxton prompted local residents to initiate the Little Paxton 'Save Our Surgery' campaign. The Campaign has produced its own response for submission to the PCT, the main points of which are summarised as follows;
- ◆ There is an irrefutable need for a surgery and patients and residents have stated clearly in a survey and at three public meetings that a surgery should be provided in Little Paxton.
 - ◆ There are more patients already registered at Little Paxton than the minimum needed for a viable branch surgery. The population of Little Paxton is considerably higher than some

other villages with branch surgeries and some with actual GP practices.

- ◆ The population of Little Paxton is likely to grow by more than a third over the next few years due to new development.
- ◆ Whereas most patients at Little Paxton are able to walk to the surgery – or drive and park easily if necessary – public transport to any other local surgery could mean return journey times varying from 75 minutes to almost 3 hours.
- ◆ The temporary arrangement currently in place has proved very popular with patients and the range of services and opening times are now regarded as excellent and as good or better than other surgeries.
- ◆ Evidence collected by the Save Our Surgery Campaign would suggest that if a permanent solution were found to keeping the Little Paxton surgery open more patients would register there.
- ◆ The present building, whilst not ideal, can be made satisfactory at least for the medium term.
- ◆ A number of sites have been identified in the village which could accommodate a new surgery.

A copy of the campaign document is available in the Executive Members room.

3.4 District Council Officers have commented on the proposals as follows:-

- from the document it seems there are presently 117 people over 75 years old registered with the Little Paxton practice and living in the village. All but the most active at that age will find difficulty in using bus services, and increasingly will find difficulty in being the driver of a car. In addition there is a significant number of people with limiting long term illness, who could be expected to place a disproportionate demand on the surgery, some of whom may also find travel challenging. Option 3 seems to be dependant on Dial-a-Ride. The report does not confirm whether:
 - a) Dial-a-Ride can accommodate a further 150 approx. new users.
 - b) Dial-a ride can extend its services to include Little Paxton to Great Staughton.
- a sum of money has been negotiated as part of the Samuel Jones development section 106 agreement for health facilities which provides the PCT with greater flexibility as to where and how the most appropriate provision of health care facilities for the village would be provided.
- the District Council is working together with the PCT to align strategies as to where and how health services are provided for

the town of St Neots and adjacent areas in the immediate and long term future taking into account areas where growth is likely to arise or where opportunities for regenerating areas of the town occur.

3.7 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

to consider whether to respond to Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust on the consultation exercise and if so, the form of the response.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

File RLC2 held in the office of the Director of Central Services.

Public Consultation for Options for Primary Care services in Little Paxton.

The Case for a Surgery in Little Paxton – A Response to the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust Consultative Document on Options for Primary Care Services in Little Paxton produced by the Little Paxton ‘Save Our Surgery’ Campaign.

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