

Draft Statement in relation to the future of Dalriada Hospital, Ballycastle

The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council appreciates that the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) operates under a tight financial management regime and has to achieve the economies and reductions in expenditure required by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety from time to time.

In October 2014 the need for such reductions in expenditure led the Trust to propose the temporary closure of Dalriada Hospital in Ballycastle. While the proposed temporary closure was reversed following a legal challenge and a vigorous local and regional campaign, the former legacy Council of Moyle was concerned about the longer term future of the hospital and it engaged experienced professional expertise to assist it and the local community to consider options for the future of the services provided at Dalriada Hospital.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, as the successor to Moyle District Council, has carefully considered the findings emerging from the work of the expert team and has concluded that the temporary or permanent closure of Dalriada Hospital would not be the most effective means of achieving economies as the expenditure reduction would be achieved only at the expense of the health of a largely elderly, remote and rural population.

The Council understands that there is emerging evidence of new approaches to addressing the needs of elderly populations which both improve health outcomes and offer substantial savings through reduced acute admissions and reduced social care costs arising from the improved health of this vulnerable section of the population. These approaches were originally piloted on a small scale in Newquay in Cornwall and are now being rolled out under the title '*Living Well*' across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and in 5 other locations in England, in each case with up to 1,000 patients in the local demonstration projects.

The early results from the wider Cornwall and Isles of Scilly project suggest that there are significant improvements in wellbeing among the target population and that very substantial savings are being achieved by a reduction of hospital admissions among the targeted population. Some of the early figures include:

- A reduction in all acute hospital costs for this population of 41%
- A reduction in all non-elective hospital costs for this population of 61%
- A reduction in all inpatient hospital activity for this population of 43%
- A reduction in Emergency Department hospital activity for this population of 36%, and
- A reduction in total social care costs for this population of 8%.

These cost reductions are not only accompanied by an improvement in the health of the targeted population but also by an increase in social capital in the areas targeted through increased use of volunteer and voluntary and community sector resources.

The Council believes that the population currently served by the Dalriada Hospital is suitable for a pilot of this new approach in the Northern Ireland context and it calls upon the Trust to work in partnership with the Council, the local community, the voluntary and community sector, the Causeway ICP and other relevant structures to explore how such approaches could be tailored and deployed in the Northern Ireland context in a pilot project.

Using this approach the current Dalriada Hospital could be turned into a hub for outreach, support and care services for the frail, the elderly and the vulnerable in Ballycastle and its hinterland as a pilot for the wider roll out of this type of approach across the Council area or, indeed, across the Trust's population.

The Council is aware that it will soon be entering into initial discussions with the Trust about the new Community Planning processes which are an important part of the wider Local Government Reform process. The Council would wish to see this type of approach strongly reflected in the Community Plan for the wellbeing of its population, initially in Ballycastle and its hinterland and then more widely throughout the Council area.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
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