

SOCIAL AFFAIRS SELECT – REPORT ON MEETING HELD 27th JULY 2010

Graham Goddard, Project Manager for the new Pembury Hospital, updated members on its progress. The building programme is ahead of schedule and on target for Phase 1A with the Women's and Children's zone to be operational from January 2011. He emphasised that patient care and safety were paramount in the design brief and that the new hospital would be the first of its kind with 100% of single beds, all en-suite, with attractive views of the surrounding countryside.

Pembury will be a District General Hospital, not a specialist hospital, and not every service will be provided on site – the diabetic centre for example.

There still remain queries around maternity services, the possibility of increasing visitor car parking provision, the potential for charging concessions and the likely prospect of the A21 being dualled in the foreseeable future.

Four annual reports were received covering Environmental Health, Equality, the Community Plan (the final report for the 2007/10 plan) and the Community Safety Partnership plan. Members were impressed by the sheer range of activities and the quality of the work undertaken. The Council's Equality scheme will need to be reviewed during the year to take account of the expected changes in legislation due to be published in April 2011. In the meantime the Authority will continue to deliver its equality action plans and position itself to implement the new Equality Act as it emerges.

Members then received a report from Mark Whyman, Chief Executive of Sencio, in which he outlined the difficulties and opportunities that have faced the leisure industry during the recession and been exacerbated by last year's poor weather.

The organisation had worked hard to engage individuals and families with physical or mental health problems to understand their specific needs. This had led to the introduction of a new membership scheme, adaptations at all the centres, and a 'Fun Club' for youngsters with disabilities and their siblings. Sencio had also been awarded the Lloyds TSB Inclusion Award for its provision of activities to meet the aspirations of people with learning difficulties.

Other initiatives had included the promotion of Primetime for the over 50s and the introduction of 'Pad Box' – a non contact boxing programme. Sencio continues to explore energy efficiency opportunities and has made huge strides to reduce its costs and bring down its deficit.

Sencio continues to work closely with the Council and other partners to deliver a wide range of targets set out in the Community Plan.

Alison Cook

Chairman

Council – 14 September 2010

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