

Chair, Councillors Cllr Lesley Mansell – Parish Councillor.

I am speaking tonight to ask you all to think very carefully about the Virgin Care service bid Care before you make a decision. It is a huge contract worth £700 million over 7 years and the decision cannot be taken without proper consideration.

I am sure it seems very attractive to make savings on community health services but the only way this can be done is to cut jobs, wages and or services.

It appears that the way this is managed in other areas is to provide support staff rather than front line staff to make savings – without considering the impact this has on care of individuals

Look at NHS Direct - it was replaced with a helpline staffed by personnel without medical training so it was cheaper. Prompting numerous complaints.

I understand this service bid does not offer an increase in wages over the next seven years. It undermines agreements for health workers by the back door.

NHS is struggling to get staff after a 5 year wage freeze.

Cutting wages particularly hits women, the long term effect of this – is that the local workforce have less to spend now - and in the future they will be short on their pensions – potentially throwing costs back on the council at a later date.

Ask you to check if there are effective break clauses in the contract.

If services deteriorate and we get stuck with this deal, then Council - the electorate will never forgive you.

The Equality Impact Assessment has little evidence to show any kind of impact. Rather it is the prayer wheel approach.

It is very poorly carried. out potentially this leaves the council open to expensive legal challenge.

For example Virgin say they provide disability training for senior leaders via “Dining with a difference events” - which are specific senior manager training sessions to raise awareness around disability issues)

This specific training is planned for 2017.

The Disability Discrimination Act came in 1995. A mere 21 years ago!

Services seem to rely on the computer - How accessible will the proposed computer system be and will it work?

Many older people and disabled people struggle to use computer systems.

In parts of NES the system is incredibly slow and promised faster broadband – is still that – a promise.

For sexual orientation- it says: "...see section 3.3 for Trans above."

This shows a complete lack of understanding of LGB & T issues.

Virgin's evidence is that they went on the Pride March in 2016 so what does that prove?

This is inappropriate, inadequate and insulting.

There are plenty more examples I can't detail here. The EIA is not fit for purpose so I wonder what else is? This is open to legal challenge.

I ask you all to take more time to consider very carefully this bid and to extend the time to do that.

There has been less than a week to consider the papers. And I would ask you think about making a decision when all Councillors have had more time to look at the proposal and checked the quality of it.

Otherwise Council - the electorate will never forgive you.

Cllr Lesley Mansell