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**OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee has undertaken: -
  - (a) **Integrated Services for Older People – Call-In** – Following the Call-in of this decision by three Members of the Scrutiny Committee, a special meeting was held to consider the costs of the integration and the implications for the future of older people's services in Darlington if the PCT is amalgamated as a result of the proposed new structure of Strategic Health Authorities. Cabinet's recommendations were supported and the Committee will continue to follow the detail of the integration process.
  - (b) **Tobacco Control in Darlington** – We held a special meeting with the Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to look at the cross-cutting issue of tobacco control. Members were given an overview of the local health picture, the Regional Tobacco Control Strategy and the local action being taken towards achieving a smoke free Darlington. Members agreed the response to the consultation on the Health Improvement and Protection Bill and have supported the establishment of a Smoke Free Partnership Group to develop a Tobacco Control Strategy for Darlington.
  - (c) **Healthcare Commission Standards for Better Healthcare – Annual Health Check** – Following the introduction of a new performance assessment process for all NHS Trusts, Members held a further special meeting to consider each Trust's self-assessment of performance and compliance against the Commission's 24 standards. The role of the Scrutiny Committee in this respect is to provide the Trust's with a 'reality check' on the assessment and to demonstrate the links between services and the experience of local people. The Scrutiny Committee's comments have been appended to the draft declarations of compliance, which were submitted to the Healthcare Commission at the end of October 2005.
  - (d) **Learning Disability Services** – The Committee continues to scrutinise the Learning Disability Service, in particular, the current service provision at the Greenbank Unit and future plans for alternative provision. A further visit to review the progress to date will be arranged over the coming weeks.
  - (e) **Choose and Book Programme** – The Committee has been briefed on the new Choose and Book Programme which is being rolled out across the Borough and will provide

patients with an online booking system and a choice of 4 different treatment providers by December 2005. We will continue to monitor the progress of this new initiative.

- (f) **Street Scene** – Along with our other non-executive colleagues, we have had the opportunity to comment and inform the proposals of the Council’s Street Scene design project and will continue to take an interest in the progress of this ‘Leading Edge’ project.
- (g) **Service Plans** – In our performance monitoring role, we have reviewed the performance against targets in relation to the Housing Service, Housing Benefits and Supporting People Service Plans and are satisfied that these areas are on target to achieve their performance objectives for 2005/06.
- (h) **Darlington: A Breastfeeding Friendly Town – Draft Final Report** – It is pleasing to report that this Review Group has completed its findings and have presented the final report and recommendations to the rest of the Scrutiny Committee. This is the first health scrutiny review that we have completed, and the recommendations have been circulated to our NHS partners for their comments. We look forward to submitting our findings to Cabinet for approval at the end of November 2005.

**Councillor Mrs. Marian Swift**  
**Chair, Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee**