
OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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) **Changes to Primary Care Trust (PCT) Arrangements in Darlington** – A special meeting was held to consider the two options out to consultation from the Strategic Health Authority (SHA). Representations were heard from our Chief Executive, Ada Burns and David Flory, Chief Executive of County Durham and Tees Valley SHA. Members of the Committee were unanimously in favour of ‘Option 2’, which would retain a coterminous boundary between the Local Authority and Darlington PCT, and these views were fed into the report, which was considered by full Council on 22nd February, 2006.
 - (b) **Teenage Pregnancy** – Following recent press coverage of the apparent lack of data for under 18 conception rates since 2002, the PCT’s Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health Co-ordinator addressed a number of Members’ concerns. It is pleasing to report that although the Office of National Statistics has just published the 2004 data, the PCT and the Acute Trust is monitoring young people’s access to maternity services on a quarterly basis to inform the relevant strategies and action plans. Darlington has also had the greatest decline in teenage pregnancies in the North East since 1998 by reducing conception rates by 25 per cent.
 - (c) **Greenbank Unit – Proposals to Consult on Future Provision of Services** – We have given our support to the PCT Trust Board’s decision to initiate a consultation process on the re-provision of services currently provided at the Greenbank Unit and have had the opportunity to comment on the plans for this consultation. The Committee will consider the results of the consultation early in the new Municipal Year.
 - (d) **Choosing Health – Update** – The Director of Public Health and Chief Executive of Darlington Partnership have updated us on the progress being made to address the priorities expressed in the Government White Paper *Choosing Health* in considering our work programme priorities.
 - (e) **Our Health, Our Care, Our Say – A New Direction for Community Services** – Each Member of the Committee has also received a full copy of this recent White Paper with the opportunity to address our Directors of Public Health and Community Services with any questions.

- (f) **Review Groups for the Municipal Year 2006/07** – Having reminded ourselves of the corporate priorities of the Council and the overall vision for Darlington, we have used these and the priorities of the White Papers above to inform a discussion on potential Review Topics for the new Municipal Year. We have chosen the area of Mental Health Services and will receive a more detailed report on the emerging issues in this area at our next meeting.
- (g) **Homelessness Review and Strategy** – We have considered the results of the recent Homelessness Strategy review and are pleased to report the success of a number of key initiatives in response to the ODPM's Homeless and Housing Advice Policy.
- (h) **Tenancy Succession Arrangements Task and Finish Review Group** – Following the findings of this Task and Finish Review, the Committee has given its support to serving a Notice of Seeking Possession as standard to tenants viewed as 'over occupying' Council accommodation, between six and twelve months after the death of the previous tenant on the proviso that, due regard be given to the tenant's mental, physical, health and emotional well being before serving the Notice and that signposting be given to the appropriate legal advice.
- (i) **Healthcare Commission – Annual Health Checks** – A special meeting was held on 14th March, 2006 at which representations were received from four NHS Trusts prior to the Committee submitting its comments for inclusion in the Trusts' final declaration of performance for 2005/06.

Councillor Mrs. Marian Swift
Chair of the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee