
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) **Haematology Inpatient Services in Darlington** – Following the decision of the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospital Trust to close the Haematology Inpatient Services at Darlington Memorial Hospital and move them to Bishop Auckland General Hospital, the Committee held a Special meeting on 16th February 2007 to discuss the report of Dr Stephen Singleton, Medical Director Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority, which formed the basis of the decision and adjourned for further consideration of the evidence. The Committee reconvened on 14th March 2007 and reluctantly agreed to support the proposals based of the evidence and the information supplied by the Chief Executive of the County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. The Committee will closely monitor the progress of the service and be kept informed when a decision is made in relation to transferring services from Durham to Bishop Auckland General Hospital
 - (b) **Annual Health Checks** – Work has been completed in response to the Annual Health Check process, which looks at the performance of NHS Trusts across the Healthcare Commission’s 24 core standards. Members of the Committee have split into four separate groups and agreed some common standards in relation to patient focus, accessible and responsive care and public health to inform our contribution to each Trusts final declaration of compliance for 2006/07. After a great deal of work undertaken by Members of the Committee the final commentaries were agreed at a Special meeting of the Committee on 5th April 2007. Our contribution to each Trusts’ final declaration of compliance for 2006/07 has now been submitted.
 - (c) **Stroke Symptoms Task and Finish Review Group** – The Stroke Symptoms Task and Finish Review Group, have continued to meet regularly and design an information card. A final report will shortly be submitted to the Committee for approval.
 - (d) **Mental Health and Well Being Review Group** – Members of the Committee have undertaken a number of visits to a variety of organisations such as Carers Support, Advocacy Together, Community mental Health Teams, MIND, etc to research further into the services provided in Darlington as part of their review. The Steering Group will be meeting soon to discuss the next steps of the review, after May 2007.
 - (e) **Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee** – There have been two meetings of the Joint Scrutiny Committee since my last report. At the first meeting, representatives from all the Tees Valley PCT’s were in attendance together with a representative from the Strategic Health Authority and an enlightening discussion was had. The Joint Committee is looking forward to receiving the PCT’s Tees-wide Commissioning

Strategy, in due course. At the last meeting, discussions were held around the Annual Health Checks in relation to the Mental Health Trust and the South Tees Hospitals Trust, the Joint Committee have agreed a response.

- (f) **Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust Durham, Foundation Trust Application** – Harry Cronin, Director of Nursing, Psychology and Allied Health Professionals, attended a recent meeting of the Committee regarding the Trusts application to become a Foundation Trust. The Director is keen to involve the Committee in how to consult with the residents of Darlington and a future meeting will be arranged to discuss this further. The full public consultation will begin in June 2007.
- (g) **Under 18 Conception Rates** – The Committee received an update from the Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health Co-Ordinator, Darlington PCT on the reduction of the under 18 conception rates in Darlington. The Committee welcomed the reduced numbers and were pleased to note the positive progress, however, concerns were raised that the withdrawal of funding for 2008 would affect future work. The Committee has agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group in the new municipal year to consider this in greater detail.
- (h) **Services for Older People in Darlington** – The Committee received an interesting update from the Service Manger of Adult Social Services and the Clinical Lead District Nursing Darlington PCT, on services for older people in Darlington and specifically following the impact of the closure of Ward 52. Members heard some distressing cases following the closure of the ward and expressed concern that patients were being referred to care in the community services before they were ready. The Committee has agreed to look into the issues raised at their next meeting.
- (i) **Tees Valley Choice Based Letting Scheme** – The Committee has recently supported the approach being adopted to Choice Based Letting (CBL) as a sub-regional initiative consultation. Darlington Borough Council and all of the other Tees Valley Local Authorities and their Housing providers have established a working group to explore the feasibility of setting up a Tees Valley Sub-Regional CBL scheme, with a view to implementation by 2008. The Committee will invite the results of the consultation and representatives from the Tenants Group to a future meeting.
- (j) **Work Programme 2007/2008** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/08 and possible review topics. We will be continuing to work on our major Mental Health and Well Being Review and of course continue to scrutinise our NHS partners and any potential changes in services.

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

Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended the following meetings: -

- Annual Health Check NEAS Task Group – visit to HQ – 1st March 2007.
- Annual Health Check PCT Task Group – visit to PCT – 1st March 2007.
- Tees Valley Health Joint Scrutiny Committee – 5th March 2007.

- Briefing with Bob Parker, Service Development and Integration Manager – 6th March 2007.
- Visit to MIND – 7th March 2007.
- Stroke Symptoms Task & Finish Group – 8th March 2007.
- Briefing with Jon Ord for Tees Valley Health Joint Scrutiny – 12th March 2007.
- Annual Health Check Acute Trust Task Group – 14th March 2007.
- Age Concern Teesside meeting – 14th March 2007.
- Stroke Symptoms Task & Finish Group – 14th March 2007.
- Annual Health Check Priority Trust Task Group – 19th March 2007.
- Tees Valley Health Joint Scrutiny Committee – 21st March 2007.