
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) **County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust** – I am pleased to report that following the lessons learnt with the closure of Ward 52, I have been meeting with John Saxby, Chief Executive of the Acute Trust and Nonnie Crawford, Director of Public Health, Darlington PCT, on a monthly basis to share information, to ensure that relations with both the Authority and the Scrutiny Committee continue to improve.
 - (b) **Annual Health Check – Areas for Review** – In preparation for 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. Successful initial Task and Finish Groups meetings have been held with Darlington PCT and the Acute Trust and preparatory work will now take place in preparation for the April 2007 deadline. Meetings with the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust and North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust will take place in mid January 2007.
 - (c) **Smoking in Sheltered Housing Task and Finish Review Group – Final Report** – Following the work of Councillors Holmes and Mrs Swift in this area, the Committee agreed the recommendations of this Group. A letter will now be sent on behalf of Darlington Borough Council as landlords, asking residents and users of sheltered housing schemes to refrain from smoking in the communal areas for the benefit of other residents, staff and the wider community. The implications of the forthcoming changes to legislation regulating smoking in public places will be explained to residents and support will be offered to any residents who may wish to stop smoking via the Primary Care Trust's Smoking Cessation Service.
 - (d) **Joint Environment and Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee – Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document** – I recently chaired the joint meeting of Environment and Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee which considered the consultations carried out on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Members had an open and frank discussion and subsequently agreed the proposed actions to finalise the content of the affordable housing SPD and the proposed responses to the objections, representations and comments received.

- (e) **Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee** – A seminar event was hosted by the Joint Committee regarding ‘Our Health, Our Care, Our Say’ White Paper, Councillor Copeland and myself represented the Committee. Dr. Jon Glasby, Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham, gave a presentation covering the key themes of the White Paper, key questions and challenges that it poses for Health and Social Care, together with its implication for Local Government and Scrutiny Committees. The Joint Committee will now draft a statement of key questions for consideration at its next meeting.

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