
OVERVIEW SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee:-
 - (a) **Haematology Services at Darlington Memorial Hospital and Bishop Auckland General Hospital** – Following recent public interest, a special meeting was held with the Chief Executive of County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust to discuss the current position of the review of inpatient haematology services across County Durham and Darlington. We have made some initial recommendations which will be forwarded to the Trust and await the final decision of the Trust Board in deciding whether to pursue this matter further.
 - (b) **Forward Plan – Overview of Website Developments** – We received an overview of the recent developments made to the Forward Plan, including how to access and search key decisions via the website and we look forward to using this more user friendly format and being involved in the ongoing development of the format of the Plan.
 - (c) **Infection Control** – Further to a recent item on infection control measures across County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, we requested a report on the measures that the Council has in place, in both the community based services that it delivers directly and in monitoring the residential care services which it commissions. This is an important issue that we will continue to look at and look forward to being consulted on the Council’s corporate approach to infection control early in the next Municipal Year.
 - (d) **Darlington Learning Disability Services** – We have been consulted on the draft Darlington Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy 2005-2008, which sets out plans for the development of this service in meeting the requirements of the Government’s Valuing People White Paper and the national social inclusion agenda. The Committee is particularly interested in developing employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and Councillors Richmond and Flowers have established a small Task and Finish Review Group to look at this issue in more detail.
 - (e) **Service Plans 2005-2006** – We have endorsed Service Plans for the Housing Services Department, Housing Benefits and Supporting People and in doing so, will monitor and review progress of these Plans against targets as necessary.

- (f) **Private Sector Housing and the Housing Act 2004** – Members highlighted a number of issues arising from the new Housing Act 2004, which is one of most significant pieces of housing legislation of the past decade, and Councillors Reynolds, Johnson and Mrs. Scott have agreed to look at certain issues with Officers in more detail through another Task and Finish Review.
- (g) **Community Equipment Services Update** – We have reviewed the implementation of the recommendations made by this Review Group back in 2002 and are pleased with progress to date
- (h) **Nursing Mothers Review Group** – Darlington: A Breastfeeding Friendly Town Update – Following the support of Darlington Partnership, preparations are underway for the Review Group to host an awareness raising event on Tuesday, 10th May, 2005 to coincide with National Breastfeeding Week. The morning event will take the form of a conference aimed at parents, carers and health professionals as well as employers in the public and private sectors and will be followed by a party in the Market Place with free, child friendly entertainment for babies, toddlers and grown-ups.
- (i) **Transport Review Update** – We have considered an early draft of the options paper being prepared by the Social Services Department and look forward to meeting again in April to discuss progress.

Councillor Mrs. Swift
Chair Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee