
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) **Annual Report** – We have compiled our Annual Report to Council, which shows that the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny has once again had a busy and challenging Municipal Year. Following our successes and increased Member activity through the use of Task and Finish Review Groups, we will continue to look at ways that we can contribute to the vision for Darlington through the Scrutiny process and focus on the Council’s corporate priorities in determining our future work programme.
 - (b) **Work Programme 2004/05** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2005/06 and in doing so examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and discussed potential Review topics for the coming year.
 - (c) **Infection Control in Care Homes in Darlington** – We are continuing to investigate this important issue and invited Nonnie Crawford, Director of Public Health and Dr. Deb Wilson, a consultant in Communicable Disease Control from County Durham and Tees Valley Health Protection Unit to our recent meeting to discuss infection control in care homes in Darlington. As a result of the meeting we intend to write to the Secretary of State for Health recommending that a system of recording wound infections be introduced nationally, and intend to invite the Independent Sector Provider Group and the nursing homes inspectorate to a future meeting.
 - (d) **Darlington Learning Disability Services** – Further to a number of visits by Members to Learning Disability facilities across Darlington, we were particularly interested in the progress being made in relation to the future plans for the Greenbank facility and will continue to be involved in the proposals for the future provision of this service to ensure that the needs of the service users are met.
 - (e) **Nursing Mothers Review Group – Darlington: A Breastfeeding Friendly Town – Update** – Much progress had been made on this Review since the last update to Council. We have officially received the support of the LSP to the project and successfully hosted an awareness raising conference to which over 100 people attended. We have also shared our learning to date with a wide audience of other local authorities from across the Country and have appointed *Meridienpure* to independently evaluate the project and facilitate a number of focus groups. We look forward to concluding this piece of work in October 2005.

- (f) **Mount Pleasant House Task and Finish Review Group** – This review has resulted in a number of amendments to the design features of this and future developments and the Group requested that in future all Ward Councillors be invited to view completed work prior to tenants taking up occupation, to allow for the continual re-evaluation of the design brief.
- (g) **Private Sector Housing and the Housing Act 2004 Task and Finish Review Group – Update** – Following a number of concerns raised over the Housing Act 2004 a task and finish review was established to meet with officers in the Community Services Department to discuss some of the issues in more detail. The Scrutiny Committee look forward to the publication of the guidance and inputting into the formulation of more detailed policies and procedures.
- (h) **Employment Opportunities for People with Learning Disabilities – Task and Finish Review Group – Update** – Following an initial discussion with Mike Ellis, Project Co-ordinator for Learning Disability Services to determine the feasibility of this piece of work, this review will be progressed throughout the coming weeks.
- (i) **Reception of Patients into GP Surgeries – Update** – In consultation with Darlington PCT’s Patient Forum consideration of frontline health service performance in respect of GP services has been recommended as an area for the Forum to investigate.
- (j) **Obesity in Children Task and Finish Review Group – Update** – This task and finish review is progressing well and the information to date will be collated and used as a basis for a more in-depth review in the coming Municipal Year.

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