
OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken by the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee :-
 - (a) **Work Programme** – Approval has been given to the Scrutiny Committee’s Work Programme for the 2004/05 Municipal Year. In compiling the work programme consideration was given the Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern. The Work Programme will be reviewed at each of the Scrutiny Committee meetings during the year.
 - (b) **Suicide Prevention within County Durham and Darlington** – Following an extensive audit of suicides in Darlington, we have considered the key findings and recommendations of the report, presented by the Priority Services Trust in relation to demographics and personal circumstances; Primary Care; Accident and Emergency Departments; Mental Health Services; Social Services; and the Criminal Justice Service and look forward to receiving updates on the progress made in by multi-agency groups in addressing this important issue.
 - (c) **Service Plan Monitoring – PerformancePlus** - We received a presentation on Service Plan Monitoring and a demonstration on how the software package Performance Plus will assist this Scrutiny in looking at and monitoring the Authority’s performance and we look forward to the training sessions which should be rolled out to all Members later this year.
 - (d) **Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy** – Consideration was given to the progress made with the development of a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which will focus on addressing issues in the 11 most deprived wards in Darlington and in particular, specific issues in relation to Social Affairs and Health including, improving diet and levels of nutrition; delivering a programme of health education; tackling loneliness among older isolated people, tackling problems posed by absentees private sector landlords; increasing Housing Association activity and retaining Council housing and keeping results down. The Committee look forward to the development of the Action Plan, which will address these issues.
 - (e) **Development of a Social Inclusion Strategy for Darlington** – A draft of the Social Inclusion strategy aimed at improving the life chances of those who are suffering or are at risk of suffering discrimination or disadvantage has been considered by the Committee and we look forward to further details on the Action Plan in due course.
 - (f) **Integration of Occupational Therapy Services across Health and Social Care** – We continue to be updated on the integration of occupational therapy services across health and social care are pleased to report that progress has been made.
 - (g) **Play Areas for Disabled Children – North Lodge Park Play Area Refurbishment – Update** - It is pleasing to report that following the influential work of the Play Areas Review Group, construction of the play area is due to commence over the next couple of weeks and

we look forward to the official opening of the park.

- (h) **Council-Wide Domestic Violence Policy – Update** - Following the success of another Scrutiny Review, we met with the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator following her appointment in January, 2004 and heard of the developments taking place across the service. Our policy has been identified as an example of excellence by the PCT and we are happy to adopt the policy jointly between the Council and the PCT.
- (i) **Delayed Discharge Task and Finish – Update** – Much progress has been made with this piece of work and it is pleasing to note that the numbers of delayed discharges caused by Social Services is minimal with no delays in May and June. We look forward to the final report on this piece of work, which will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.
- (j) **Transport Review Group – Update** – The work of this Review is ongoing and both the health and social care group are meeting with the Director of Patient Transport Services for the North East Ambulance Service and the Transport Services Manager for Social Services at Sunderland City Council over the coming weeks, and will have a fuller update for the next meeting.
- (k) **Best Value Housing Services Progress Report** – It is pleasing to report the progress made in respect of the Best Value Review of the Housing Service and that 46 out of the 47 improvement action points have been achieved while 1 is ongoing.
- (l) **Health Scrutiny Support Programme – Bid for Project Funding** – Following the initial work of the Nursing Mothers Review Group, we are in the process of submitting a bid to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) for £20,000 to undertake an action learning project to develop health scrutiny locally and from which lessons can be learned and best practice shared with other local authorities and health partners. Only 9 projects will be funded across the Country and we will find out whether our bid has been successful by the end of July, 2004.

Councillor Marian Swift
Chair of Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee