

# Item no

Report to: **Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **Wednesday 4 January 2006**

Report of: **Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**

Subject: **The Darzi Review of Acute Health Services North and South of the Tees**

Ward: **All**

## 1 **Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to highlight the results of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's investigation into the implications of the Darzi Review of Acute Health Services North and South of the Tees for the residents of the District in terms of access/transport to NHS services.

## 2 **Consultation**

2.1 In preparing this report I have consulted with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Executive Member for Health and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

## 3 **Background**

3.1 On 8 July 2005, the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority received the report of Professor Ara Darzi's review of acute hospital services north and south of the Tees.

3.2 The report included a number of key recommendations which will change the way in which some NHS services are provided North and South of the Tees and which will impact upon some of the residents of the District of Easington.

3.3 A summary of the main recommendations is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

3.4 A formal consultation period commenced in September 2005 and will run for three months. This has been led by a PCT/Health Trust Joint Committee.

3.5 At an early stage, the District Council recognised that the proposals have the potential to have a major impact upon some of the District's residents. As such, it wanted to ensure that the recommendations of Professor Darzi, if implemented, would not have adverse effects on some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

3.6 The Council had expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on the ability of patients, their families and visitors to access those NHS services transferred, particularly in terms of availability and affordability of public transport.

3.7 Accordingly, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 13 September 2005 agreed the following Terms of Reference for an investigation, namely:-

- To examine the extent to which transport is a barrier that prevents the residents of Easington District from accessing NHS services (in the Tees Valley area) (affected by the Darzi review).
- To request and consider responses from those organisations involved in the provision of transport to NHS services affected by the Darzi Review.
- To undertake public questioning of key witnesses of these issues.
- To gather the views of local residents on practical experience of travelling to local NHS services.
- To ascertain examples of both good practice and problems associated with transport links/access to NHS services affected by the Darzi Review.
- To produce a final report detailing the findings of the review and including recommendations to improve the situation.

#### 4 **Position Statement**

4.1 Following adoption of the aforementioned Terms of Reference, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 13 September heard evidence from Dr Roger Bolas, Chief Executive of Easington Primary Care Trust (PCT).

4.2 Issues which arose from Dr Bolas' presentation were as follows:-

- Residents of Peterlee and Seaham could access hospital services using public transport within an hour with no more than one bus change. However, in rural communities, attending early morning appointments as well as weekend and evening visiting was problematic.
- Rural Bus Challenge funding had been secured to provide a more responsive, localised service. This was time limited to three years with no guarantee that further funding after this time would be available.
- A scheme of "travel vouchers" to be issued when appointments were booked had been suggested during discussions between PCTs and was to be investigated further.
- Following the introduction of the Urgent Care Centre in Peterlee, attendance at the A&E department at University Hospital Hartlepool by residents of the District of Easington had decreased by over 30% when comparing August 2004 with August 2005 figures.
- Patients and visitors had experienced great difficulties in accessing information relating to bus services, particularly in the

evening and at weekends. This needed to be available on a real-time basis when appointments are first made.

- Concerns were expressed at the potential effect upon patient transportation to and from hospital services of the proposed Ambulance Trust mergers.
- Members of the Committee referred to the problems for patients and visitors using public transport in respect of discounted travel cards not being transferable between bus operators and also concessionary bus passes not being accepted for journeys within Teesside.
- The PCT had agreed to consider the potential for working up sustainable solutions to the problem of patient/visitor access to services following the Darzi Review during its 2006/7 budgetary setting process.

4.3 When pressed regarding the potential structural changes which may be implemented regarding the PCT's in County Durham and the need to have transport solutions in place prior to these changes, Dr Bolas indicated that he would revise his commitment forward to January 2006 for the implementation of transport schemes in Easington District.

4.4 As part of its investigations, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee sought the views of members of the public who had experienced difficulties in accessing health services. A press release and an article in Infopoint had been produced which invited members of the public to either attend the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to report their concerns in person or to pass them onto the Scrutiny Support Manager who would report them on their behalf.

4.5 To date, no representations from members of the public have been made which were relevant to the Darzi proposals although some concerns had been expressed regarding the bus services to University Hospital North Durham from the Wheatley Hill, Thornley and Wingate areas.

4.6 In view of this, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee decided to invite representatives of the Easington Public Patient Involvement Forum to give evidence which they had received from the public as well as in their capacity as a statutory consultee regarding health matters.

4.7 To this end, Mr Tom McCully from the PPI forum attended the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2005.

4.8 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Easington Primary Care Trust had asked the District of Easington PPI Forum to use its independent role to make a series of health journeys using public transport. This request followed public meetings held in respect of the Tees Review which had identified patient/public concerns over difficulties in travelling from locations in Easington district to health centres and hospitals beyond the district's boundaries.

4.9 The journeys monitored as part of the process are detailed in Appendix 2.

4.10 Issues arising from the evidence given by Mr McCully were:-

- Punctuality of the bus services was generally fair but not consistent across all journeys.
- On the basis of the 6 journeys carried out by PPI Forum Members it is clear that journeys using public transport throughout Easington District are stressful and confusing.
- Staff were generally helpful but information on making journeys was patchy and inconsistent at all levels.
- Bus cleanliness varied from Excellent to Very Poor.
- Seat availability on buses was consistently good.
- Service standards in Easington from Arriva Buses was poorer than those services in Durham City.
- The cleanliness and standard of bus shelters (where they existed!) were very poor which was a real concern during adverse weather.
- The problem of 'interchangeability' of bus tickets between bus services meant that bus travel was often more expensive.
- The proposed 'choose and book' system would only be successful if it was accompanied at source by real time travel information for bus services.
- There was a lack of easy access buses on those routes to the hospitals which made travel even harder for people with mobility problems.

4.11 At this meeting, discussion also took place regarding the proposed Ambulance Trust Mergers within the region. Councillor David Taylor-Gooby reported that at a presentation made by the Ambulance service which he had attended, there were suggestions made that a number of areas of good practice existed in Northumberland that could be introduced within County Durham and Cleveland. These included volunteer and community transport schemes which may prove to be a more sustainable and viable option than reliance on commercial bus operators.

4.12 In view of those comments made regarding community and voluntary transport schemes, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agreed to investigate those schemes currently available and the potential to develop them.

4.13 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee met on 25 October 2005 to hear evidence from Liam Weatherill, the project manager for East Durham Community Transport.

4.14 Mr Weatherill drew members attention to the following issues:-

- Despite there being a major problem within parts of County Durham regarding access to health services, the County Council had been awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status for local transport improvements.

- Consultants had been appointed to conduct a mapping exercise for accessibility to services including hospitals, GPs and Dentists. The results were to be reported to the Easington Local Strategic Partnership Sub Group for transport on 27 October 2005. It was anticipated that the report would conclude that the residents of Easington could easily access such services via public transport. Mr Weatherill suggested that the reality was somewhat different.
- During 2004/5 East Durham Community Transport (EDCT) had secured £650,000 worth of funding for accessible services within the Easington District. Using this funding, 4 Community Transport vehicles had been replaced and funding for the scheme had been secured until 2007.
- EDCT provided subsidised fares to community groups and voluntary organisations.
- Communicare provided a hospital link service costing £2 per return journey although public awareness of this scheme was somewhat limited.
- A Health Appointment Car Scheme operated in mid-Durham to provide transport for patients to GP surgeries in Thornley, Trimdon, Wingate and Wheatley Hill who are unable to use public transport. Funding for this scheme was due to expire in March 2006.
- The Tees Health and Transport Partnership Group had discussed proposals to fund a shuttle-bus to operate between the University Hospital of Hartlepool to the University Hospital of North Tees. This was likely to cost in the region of £90k and given this cost a Cost Benefit Analysis would be needed.
- Whilst 40% of buses within County Durham were “easy access”, the bus operators could not guarantee that these buses would be in operation on the “hospital routes”.
- In emergencies, the University Hospital of Hartlepool often sent patients home in a taxi. This service cost the NHS approximately £50,000 per year. Furthermore, these taxis often could not accommodate disabled people.

4.15 In conclusion, Mr Weatherill stressed that it was obvious that there was a demand for an effective, reliable and sustainable transportation service which would improve access to health services particularly hospital services being reviewed as part of the Darzi proposals.

4.16 It was also important that such a service would need to be affordable and meet the needs of those vulnerable residents of the district who needed it most.

4.17 In his view, Mr Weatherill suggested that such a service was unlikely to be provided by commercial bus operators but rather by Community Transport schemes.

4.18 The success of such schemes would be dependent upon a number of factors including:-

- funding availability and sustainability
- buy in of local authorities, health service providers and other agencies in terms of funding support
- the linkages between health initiatives such as “choose and book” schemes and the availability of transportation for patients
- long term commitments to Community Transport and other voluntary transport schemes by statutory agencies.

4.19 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee then decided to consult with Durham County Council as the responsible authority for Local Transport Planning, Bus Subsidies and Health Scrutiny as well as in the light of potential effects which the Darzi Review proposals may have on their health care and social services.

4.20 A brief was provided to Durham County Councils Head of Transport which sought the County Council’s views in respect of:-

- any input that they may have into any required transport solutions arising out of the Darzi Review
- the information that they had in respect of the Darzi Transport Review Group meetings which had been held.

4.21 At its meeting held on 15 November 2005, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee heard evidence from Mr Steve Lockwood, Rural Transport Team Leader, Durham County Council on these issues.

4.22 Mr Lockwood reported upon the following issues:-

- Mr Lockwood represented the County Council on the Transport Working Group which had been established to discuss the implications of the Darzi Review in respect of access to health services.
- At the first meeting of the Transport Working Group it had been recommended that the changes proposed under the Darzi be not implemented until such time as the transportation issues identified had been addressed.
- Reference was made to a booklet which had been produced by Durham and Darlington Transport Partnership which provided information on all transport links to health facilities in Durham and Darlington. The Transport Working Group had suggested that a similar guide be produced specific to District of Easington.
- Recently announced changes to subsidised bus services by Durham County Council, would have some slight impact upon services to and from hospitals. However, these had been minimised particularly on bus services accessing health facilities and the changes agreed after extensive investigation.

- Some of the subsidised bus services under review would be replaced by demand-responsive taxis, a service which already existed in some parts of the County.
- In terms of Durham County Councils involvement in any long term transport solutions, Mr Lockwood indicated that the Rural Transport Partnership would be more focussed and would engage the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership. Furthermore, the Local Transport Plan 2 would be finalised in March 2006 and would include, for the first time, a capital funding stream which could be utilised to replace existing community transport vehicles with newer models.

4.23 In considering the evidence of Mr Lockwood, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee emphasised the importance of ensuring that real-time travel information was available in respect of accessing health services whether this be via websites, Council Offices, GP surgeries and hospitals, etc.

4.24 Finally, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee invited Dr Roger Bolas back to its meeting held on 6 December 2005 to update Members on the latest position in respect of the information discussed and recommendations agreed by the Transport Working Group. He had also been requested to provide an update on the commitment given to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 13 September that schemes to address transport issues within Easington District would be implemented by January 2006.

4.25 At the meeting, Dr Bolas raised the following issues:-

- In examining the sustainability of any of the proposals ultimately implemented by way of Acute Health Services arising from the Darzi Review, examination needed to take place regarding the effects upon transport and access to health service provision
- Trauma services reviewed as part of the Darzi proposals would mean that transportation to these services by way of the A19 would not be too problematic
- In respect of local health services, the Easington PCT business plan was centred around providing more services locally that will in turn reduce the need for patients travelling outside the District of Easington
- The development of Urgent Care Centres at Peterlee and Seaham should reduce the need for travel to health services outside the district
- There are a number of schemes already in place which aim to address existing problems of access to health services within the district such as Communicare; the Social Car Scheme and the hospital travel cost scheme. The issue of concern seemed to be the funding and sustainability of such schemes
- When pressed on whether transportation solutions would be implemented prior to the proposed PCT reconfiguration, Dr Bolas indicated that he could not give this guarantee

- In implementing any proposals agreed arising from the Darzi review, it was envisaged that this would be done on a stepped basis. As such, it was hoped that any associated transport solutions could be introduced on a similar basis
- The commitment made previously at the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee relating to January 2006 and transport solutions referred only to discussing proposals at the conclusion of the Darzi consultation period
- The previously reported commitment that the increase in resources allocated to Easington PCT for the period 2006-2008 would be ring-fenced to Easington remained, although this could not be guaranteed after March 2008.

4.26 In acknowledging the comments made by Dr Bolas the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee expressed the belief that there exists a real opportunity for Easington PCT to align service planning with transport planning.

4.27 In the light of previous adverse reports and comments made regarding the standards of service provided within Easington District by Arriva, representatives of that organisation were invited to attend the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 6 December 2005 to answer the aforementioned criticisms. There was no representation from Arriva at the meeting.

#### 5.0 **Local Consultation Exercise – The Darzi Review**

5.1 As part of the formal consultation exercise established for the Darzi Review report, a local stakeholder event was held by the Easington Primary Care Trust on Monday 17 October 2005 at the Glebe Centre, Murton.

5.2 The consultation exercise provided information regarding the proposals being put forward as part of the Darzi Review, specifically in respect of:-

- The terms of reference given to Professor Darzi in providing advice to the Strategic Health Authority.
- The areas and health facilities that would be affected by the review.
- National factors which were driving change within the National Health Service.
- Local factors which were also driving change.
- Proposals to move services between North and South of the Tees.
- Drawing together a strategy for the provision of acute hospital services within this area.
- The difference between the Darzi Review proposals and the options previously suggested as part of the Tees Review which commenced in 2003.



- Proposals for changes in service provision at University Hospital of Hartlepool, University Hospital of North Tees and the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton.
  - Proposals rejected outright by the Darzi Review, and
  - Transport issues arising from the Darzi Review and the associated changes being recommended in hospital services North and South of the Tees.
- 5.3 The event was attended by 50-60 stakeholders representing a mid range of interested parties including District Parish/Town, and County Councillors; health practitioners, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community and Voluntary sector. Councillors Campbell and Haggan who are members of this Committee as well as the Scrutiny Support Manager were in attendance.
- 5.4 Issues arising out of the Stakeholder event which specifically related to access to hospital services by residents of the District either as patients or visitors included:-
- issues of deprivation within the District of Easington in respect of access to services/transportation, especially in relation to low levels of car ownership.
  - dissatisfaction amongst residents of the district with Public Transport.
  - the potential prohibitive cost of travelling to health service providers.
  - the need for long term solutions which are effective and sustainable.
- 5.5 Whilst the event centred around the overall affects of the Darzi Review upon the residents of all areas, it was noted that the provision of transport solutions was timetabled to be undertaken within the next 12 – 24 months.
- 5.6 With reference to this timetable for transport solutions, concern was expressed by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee that this conflicted with the information provided to this Committee by Dr Roger Bolas on 13 September that the implementation of transport solutions specifically to Easington PCT would be worked up for January 2006.
- 5.7 To this end, a letter requesting clarification of this issue was sent to Dr Bolas on behalf of the Committee by Councillor R Burnip, the Vice-Chair.
- 5.8 A response from Dr Bolas on this issue was received by the Vice-Chair on 24 November 2005 a copy of which is attached as Appendix 3.
- 5.9 Whilst representatives of both of the main commercial bus operators within Easington District were invited to attend the Stakeholder event, neither Arriva nor Go North East were represented.

## 6 **Conclusions**

- 6.1 It is clear from the evidence presented to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee that there are a number of issues which need to be addressed in order to ensure that the proposals suggested as part of the Darzi Review do not further impact upon the residents of Easington's ability to access health services.
- 6.2 There is an issue within the District of Easington in respect of the availability, reliability and affordability of public transport, particularly bus services.
- 6.3 Given that the hospital services affected by the Darzi Review all lie outside the District of Easington, existing problems related to access to these services for residents of the district will be exacerbated. The potential costs for patients and visitors of purchasing tickets valid for all services and all operators may be prohibitive.
- 6.4 During the investigations, considerable discussion has taken place regarding the potential use of community transport schemes as a real alternative solution to commercial operators in meeting the transportation gaps identified arising from the Darzi Review.
- 6.5 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee wholeheartedly support the use of Community Transport schemes in this manner. However, there is an acknowledgement that significant investment in such schemes will need to be made to ensure their sustainability. Accordingly, it is vital that all partner organisations commit to such schemes. One way of trying to achieve this could be via the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership's Transport Working Group. The Committee have recommended accordingly.
- 6.6 Whilst it is important to have a sustainable transport infrastructure in place in readiness for the Darzi Review, it is essential that the National Health Service acknowledges the critical role of local transport services in ensuring that patients and visitors can access health services when they need to. Accordingly, when making appointments, health practitioners should seek to ensure that the transport links are in place to allow patients/visitors to attend the appointments on time. Furthermore, hospital bookings may need to be scheduled so that those patients living closer to the hospitals receive the earlier appointments.
- 6.7 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have encountered a number of problems with regard to the timeliness and quality of information available to the public regarding both public transport and community transport solutions. As a result, it is the view of the Committee that, whatever solutions are implemented to address the difficulties of access to hospital arising out of the Darzi Report, there needs to be a tangible improvement in the quality of information available to the public including:-
- timely and accurate public transport information regarding travel times and routes being available on-line via a wide range of public access channels as well as at bus stops throughout the district.
  - the production of a comprehensive guide for the public explaining how to access services, especially those related to health.

- the widespread acknowledgement of and production of publicity relating to Community and Voluntary transportation schemes available with which to access health services.
- the availability of concessionary bus passes and discounted ticket offers which may be available for travel both within County Durham and to the adjoining regions.
- the policies and procedures available within the NHS in respect of patient transportation and access to health services.

## 7 **Implications**

### 7.1 Financial Implications

7.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### 7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### 7.3 Policy Implications

7.3.1 There are no Policy Implications arising from this report.

### 7.4 Risk Implications

7.4.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken and the necessary actions required to manage those risks have been identified.

### 7.5 Communications Implications

7.5.1 The report has been produced as part of the Council's role as a formal consultee in respect of the Darzi Review of Acute Services North and South of the Tees and will be communicated to the Executive, if agreed, as part of the Council's response to the aforementioned consultation process.

7.5.2 Thereafter, it will be for the Executive to determine how it wishes to communicate the Council's formal response to the consultation exercise.

## 8 **Corporate Implications**

### 8.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities

8.1.1 The issues identified within the report will contribute to Council Priority 1, Quality Services for our people, Priority 6, Better Transport and Priority 8, Building a Healthy Community.

8.1.2 The issues specifically seek to address the following Council objectives which underpin those Council Priorities identified in 8.1.1 above:-

QS1 To provide and promote accessible, customer-focussed cross-cutting services which achieve e-government targets.

QS2 To develop our community leadership and engagement role and to develop partnerships under the auspices of the Local Strategic Partnership.

BT2 To ensure a comprehensive and effective physical and technological infrastructure.

BHC1 To promote and encourage improved access to healthcare and healthy living.

## 8.2 **Equality and Diversity**

8.2.1 The recommendations within this report seek to demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring that the more vulnerable members of the Easington District have an equality of access to Health Services following implementation of the proposals within the Darzi Review, especially those with disabilities.

## 8.3 **E-Government**

8.3.1 The report highlights the importance of ensuring that information relating to real-time transport services are available via a range of public access media channels and that this is integrated with the NHS Information Services relating to the booking of medical appointments/treatments.

## 8.4 **Procurement**

8.4.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## 8.5 **Performance Management and Scrutiny Implications**

8.5.1 This report has been prepared following a request from the Leader of the Council that, as part of the formal consultation process for The Darzi Review of Acute Health Services North and South of the Tees, an examination be undertaken in respect of the implications of the Review on access/transportation to health services.

## 8.6 **Sustainability**

8.6.1 The report seeks to ensure that any proposals which are developed in respect of transport solutions to those problems of access to health services arising out of the Darzi Review are sustainable.

## 8.7 **Social Inclusion**

8.7.1 The report and recommendations seek to ensure that the impact upon the elderly and infirm members of the community of the changes to health service provision proposed under the Darzi Review are minimised by the implementation of accessible, affordable, reliable and sustainable transport solutions which ensure access to hospital services.

## 9 **Summary**

9.1 This report details the findings of a time-limited investigation by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee into the implications of the Darzi Review of

Acute Health Services North and South of the Tees for the residents of the District in terms of access/transport to NHS services.

9.2 The recommendations detailed in Section 10 of the report form the basis for representations to be made by the Council as part of the formal consultation process which has been undertaken regarding the Darzi Review.

## 10 **Recommendations**

10.1 Members are invited to receive this report, agree its content and to approve the following recommendations that:-

- (i) the recommendation from the Transport Working Group established to consider the Darzi Review that the proposed changes to hospital services detailed within the review be deferred until such time as appropriate transport solutions can be agreed and implemented which address the problems identified during the course of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's investigations in respect of access to health services be supported.
- (ii) the assurances given by the Chief Executive of Easington Primary Care Trust that transport solutions will be implemented within Easington District from January 2006 in advance of Trust re-configuration be welcomed and supported and the sustainability of these solutions be examined as part of the PCT's 2006/7 budget setting process.
- (iii) the concerns raised by this investigation in respect of the availability, accessibility, reliability and affordability of public transportation to health services affected by the review be incorporated in the Council's formal response to the consultation exercise. Furthermore the Partnerships Scrutiny Committees beliefs that appropriate transport solutions will not be met wholly by commercial bus operators be also included in this response.
- (iv) the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee recommend that the development of Community Transport Schemes be investigated as a real alternative solution to commercial bus operators. This may require a significant level of investment from partner organisations to ensure the sustainability of any Community Transport Scheme. It is further recommended that this be examined by the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership's Transport Working Group.
- (v) the Strategic Health Authority seek to ensure that as part of the implementation of patient "choose and book" schemes as well as other patient appointments that access to real-time transportation is available to ensure that appointments arranged for patients can be attended.
- (vi) the issues highlighted in section 6.7 of the report relating to the availability of improved information for the public in respect of transportation to those hospital services affected by the Darzi Review be addressed as part of any proposed transportation solution.

- 10.2 It is further recommended that the report and recommendations be submitted to the Executive for consideration with a view to the issues around transport and access to health services within Easington District being included in the Council's formal response to the consultation.

### **Background Papers**

- 1 "Acute Services Review – Hartlepool and Teesside" – Report by Sir Ara Darzi.
- 2 "County Durham and Tees Valley Strategy Health Authority welcomes report on Health Services North and South of the Tees" – County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority Press Release.
- 3 "The Darzi Review of Acute Health Services North and South of the Tees" – Report to Partnerships Scrutiny Committee 13 September 2005.
- 4 Partnerships Scrutiny Committee Minutes –  
  
13 September 2005  
4 October 2005  
25 October 2005  
15 November 2005
- 5 Presentation to Easington Primary Care Trust Stakeholder Event – 17 October 2005.
- 6 Your Guide to Transport for Health in County Durham and Darlington – joint leaflet by NHS, Darlington Borough Council and Durham County Council.
- 7 Patient Public Involvement forum for Easington District – Report on Test Journeys to hospitals using public transport.