

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON TUESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2007**

Present:- Councillor R. Burnip (Chair)  
Councillors J. Haggan and  
Mrs. S. Mason

Also Present: Councillor Mrs. E. Huntington - Executive Member for Health

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors C. Patching, P.J. Campbell, R. Crute and B. Joyce.

- 2. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 30th January 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.
- 3. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 6th February 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

**4. REVIEW OF HEALTH SERVICES NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE TEES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Health which advised on the outcome of the Secretary of State for Health's referral to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) of proposed changes to paediatric and maternity services for the North Tees area as part of the wider Review of Health Services North and South of the Tees, following the Darzi Review completed in July 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

As part of the review process, the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority was required to establish a Joint Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the proposals for service change.

The Secretary of State's appointed Service Reconfiguration Panel undertook its review work between October and December 2006. As part of their work, a number of local consultation meetings were held with interested parties. This included meetings with John Cummings MP and Professor Darzi. The Council secured a meeting with the Panel in November 2006 and also submitted written representations.

The Council articulated the view that any service changes should accord with a number of principles which were outlined in the report.

The IRP presented their report to the Secretary of State on the 18th December 2006. The report made a number of recommendations that were outlined in Appendix 1.

The Secretary of State had now considered the report and had confirmed in a letter to the Chair of the Joint Local Authority Health Scrutiny Committee and to

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other stakeholders that she had accepted the report's recommendations. This effectively brought the review process to a conclusion. It was now a matter for the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust in consultation with the relevant Primary Care Trust to work towards the implementation of the agreed proposals.

The Leader of the Council had written to the Secretary of State to express disappointment at the outcome and the fact that it was considered that this would weaken the role of University Hospital of Hartlepool as a general hospital facility to the detriment of residents in East Durham.

The Partnership Scrutiny Committees' views were sought on how they might assist to ensure the implementation of the planned service reconfiguration of paediatrics and maternity services would benefit residents of East Durham who utilised services at Hartlepool and North Tees Hospital sites and to safeguard the sustainable future of University Hospital of Hartlepool in line with the Council's objective to secure improved access to health services for residents of East Durham.

**RESOLVED** that the Partnership Scrutiny Committee:-

- (i) undertake a review to determine the identifiable benefits to East Durham of the review outcome recommendations;
- (ii) engage with Hartlepool Borough Council's Health Scrutiny Committee to ascertain their views;
- (iii) invite the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust to explain how they would work to plan services to address the needs and accessibility issues facing residents of Easington District arising from the proposed changes;
- (iv) consider the implications of the proposed changes on access to and usage of other acute hospital services in Sunderland and Durham and the impact this may have on the District's residents.

### 5. **POST OFFICE NETWORK CONSULTATION**

The Chair explained that a consultation document had been received from Post Watch regarding the Government's future funding and structure arrangements of the Post Office Network. Consultation was a crucial exercise as it would help determine the long term role Post Offices played in rural and urban communities throughout the U.K. The key proposals in the consultation were detailed in the report

The Chair explained that the consultation document would also be considered at District Council on 1st March 2007. The Scrutiny Support Manager had drafted a response to the consultation document which would be returned before the 8th March 2007 deadline.

The Director of Regeneration and Development explained that staff from his unit had carried out research as part of the proposals and generous packages were being offered to post offices to cease operation. Access to post offices was very important for the vulnerable members of the community.

**RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Support Manager be authorised to respond to the consultation document.

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**6. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

JC/CB/COM/PART.SCRUT/070204  
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