

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**OF THE PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2007**

Present: Councillor C Patching (Chair)  
Councillors R Burnip, P J Campbell,  
J Haggan, B Joyce, T Longstaff,  
Mrs S Mason, D Milsom and  
Mrs B A Sloan

Also Present: Councillor R Crute – Executive Member for Regeneration  
Councillor Mrs E Huntington – Executive Member for Health  
Councillor R J Todd – Executive Member for Housing  
Councillor A J Holmes

Councillors J Brash, Mrs M Fleet,  
G Lilley, Mrs P Rayner and  
Mrs G Worthy – Hartlepool Borough Council  
Mrs J Norman, Mrs J Kennedy and  
Mrs M Green – Resident Representatives

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 20 February 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed subject to Councillors D Milsom and Mrs B A Sloan being added to the apologies for absence.

2 **MATTERS ARISING**

**Post Office Network Consultation  
(Minute no 5 refers)**

The Scrutiny Support Manager advised that two responses had been submitted to Postwatch regarding the consultation on the future funding and structure arrangements of the Post Office network.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

- 3 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 27 February 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

**Item 4 – Easington Council of Voluntary Services (CVS)**

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that the report sought to formalise the arrangement of the CVS funding to East Durham Community Development Trust which replaced the CVS and the Community Empowerment Network (CEN).

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

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

**5 ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair, following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that following item of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**6 THE DARZI REVIEW OF ACUTE HOSPITAL SERVICES NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE TEES (AOB)**

The Chair welcomed representatives from Hartlepool Borough Council's Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum who were in attendance to discuss their Council's position in respect of the findings of the Independent Review Panel (IRP) into the Darzi Review.

Councillor Brash explained that Hartlepool Borough Council had been angered and disappointed by the Secretary of State's endorsement of the IRP. There was now a realisation that the decision was not going to be reversed and the Council had more questions than answers as a result of the whole process. Their Council had made a resolution to use the scrutiny process to deal with the issues that had arisen. Hartlepool Borough Council wanted to be able to set the agenda and wanted to be included in the decision making process.

One concern was that staff and resources could be moved to North Tees and the hospital would be refurbished rather than a new build. Ian Dalton, the Chief Executive of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust had advised that there would be a minimum of ten years before any new build would take place, although the NHS Trust was only obliged to plan five years ahead. It was vitally important to work across the boundaries and it was more vital to Easington as they were further away from Stockton than Hartlepool.

A Member queried if it was Hartlepool Borough Council's policy to stop campaigning to keep Hartlepool hospital open.

Councillor Brash explained that the resolution to Council condemned the decision of the IRP and the Council had written to the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister to request them to reconsider the decision. He was fearful that if the Council continued to discuss the retention of Hartlepool hospital, decisions would be made without their input. The Council was looking at Primary Care Trusts and transport as a matter of course but this would now become more urgent if the hospital was moved to North Tees or a new build at Wynyard. Hartlepool Borough Council must be part of the process that sets the health agenda.

Councillor Lilley explained that Hartlepool Borough Council wanted to keep services local. There was a huge problem with transport and once services started moving away then there would be an even bigger problem than at present.

The Chair summarised that Hartlepool's position was that they were still looking at the contestability of the decision from the Secretary of State but also in parallel, at implementation issues to maximise the benefit to residents of Hartlepool from any reconfiguration.

Councillor Brash explained that there was a fear that a new hospital was a myth and in ten years time the University Hospital of North Tees would be refurbished and become the new hospital and Hartlepool would close. All Members at Hartlepool Borough Council would choose Wynyard as their first choice for a new build hospital

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if Hartlepool was to close. They were trying to make sure the right decisions were made.

Councillor Holmes explained that he thought Hartlepool Borough Council had had a laid back attitude from the beginning and had not given the Save our Hospital Campaign enough support.

Councillor Brash explained that when the Secretary of State had referred the Darzi Review to the IRP, himself and Councillor Lilley had collected signatures around the Headland. Hartlepool Councillors had done a great deal and they had met with representatives from the IRP to express their views.

The Chair commented that Members were aware of the reassurance Hartlepool had been given over the years. Iain Wright MP, John Reid MP and Tony Blair's office had all given assurances that Hartlepool hospital would remain and could understand that the continuation of the University of Hartlepool Hospital had not felt under threat. He queried if there was opportunity for judicial review.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that a judicial review could only be undertaken if the process in which the review was carried out was under question. He had some concerns about the IRP but was unsure whether that constituted a flaw in the process. The District Council had supported Professor Darzi in his conclusions of the review and he felt that the remit of the IRP was at odds with Professor Darzi. Transport and access to services were common ground with Hartlepool Borough Council and the Councils must work together.

Councillor Joyce commented that he felt that if staff were moved to North Tees this would have an affect on morale.

Councillor Brash explained that Hartlepool Borough Council had questioned the Chief Executive of the NHS Trust and he was adamant that they were building up services at Hartlepool but this was contrary to evidence that was coming out of the hospital.

Councillor Lilley explained that there wasn't much scope for the legal process but morally he felt the process had been underhand. With regard to the Darzi Review, the joint PCT had been in support of Darzi but their final comment was that they preferred a single site. The Strategic Health Authority was in favour of Darzi's recommendations but also had stated that a single site would be preferable. He did not fully understand the remit of the IRP and it seems they had gone way beyond what they set out to do.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that they needed to establish if there was a legal flaw in the process and was not clear how the IRP could be valued above Professor Darzi.

Councillor Mrs Worthy explained that the health service should be for the public. The health service was now being run as a private business and the welfare of residents were suffering. She felt that the health service was being run down.

The Executive Member for Housing explained that Easington was in a unique position as they had never had the benefit of a general hospital and the public had always travelled to Hartlepool, Sunderland or Durham. When he was a member on Easington PCT, he could recall Ken Jarrold, Chief Executive of County Durham and Darlington Health Authority first making mention of a single site hospital. A public relation exercise had been carried out and they were now back to where they had

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started. He didn't believe that the decision of the Secretary of State would be reversed. The Council now needed to think about how Primary Care services could be developed. Primary Care services in Seaham and Peterlee were being developed which would take services from the hospital into the local community.

Councillor Mrs Rayner explained that she had attended a meeting with the Chief Executive of the University Hospital of Hartlepool who were looking at Foundation Status. She felt that this would make it a private enterprise and they had to attract patients to the hospital. They were now looking at the hospital as a business. She queried how they attracted patients to a hospital. Staff were travelling in a taxi from Hartlepool to North Tees to see patients at the expense of the hospital.

Charlotte Burnham, the Head of Scrutiny at Hartlepool Borough Council explained that two scrutiny inquiries were to commence looking at better transport links and development of primary care in communities. There may be an opportunity to do some joint working with the District of Easington.

Councillor Lilley explained that Ian Dalton had advised that it would not be the role of the health authority to subsidise transport and he felt that the responsibility would eventually come down to local authorities.

The Executive Member for Health explained the key issue was around access to services and transport. For some residents in the district, it could take up to two hours to get to North Tees Hospital with numerous changes of buses and felt very strongly that there needed to be care in the community.

Councillor Brash commented that they would have to resist the development of a new hospital by way of Private Finance Initiative as this could potentially return the Health Trust to a serious position of debt.

The Chair explained that the Health Scrutiny function rested with Durham County Council and the District Council had representatives on the committee. He would be happy to take up any offer of joint working with Hartlepool Borough Council on accessibility, transport, development of services in the community and Primary Care services. They were common ground and could be taken forward in a practical way. He suggested that Ian Dalton, the Chief Executive of the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust could be invited to a future meeting.

**RESOLVED** that :-

- (i) the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agree to undertake joint working where possible with Hartlepool Borough Council as detailed above.
- (ii) Ian Dalton, Chief Executive of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust be invited to a future meeting to discuss the future of the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the implications thereof upon the residents of District of Easington.