

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
REGENERATION SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 31 JULY 2008**

Present: Councillor D. Raine (Chair)  
Councillors S. Bishop, Mrs. E.M. Connor,  
Mrs. S. Forster, H. High, A.J. Holmes,  
D.J. Taylor-Gooby and C. Walker

Also Present: Councillors B. Burn, A. Burnip, R. Burnip,  
R. Crute, Mrs. J. Freak, J. Haggan, Mrs.  
A.E. Laing, A. Napier, P. Stradling and  
R.J. Todd.

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 14 July 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.
2. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 22 July 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

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

3. **THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 25 June and 8 July 2008, copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

**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. **FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 28th July 2008 the following issue was discussed:-

**East Durham Local Strategic Partnership - Community Strategy**

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

6. **MOMENTUM : PATHWAYS TO HEALTHCARE**

(i) **Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements**

Jeremy Brock, Health Scrutiny Liaison Manager was in attendance to update Members on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements in respect of the formal consultation process for the Momentum project.

J. Brock explained that Feisal Jasset, Councillors Mrs E. Huntington and Mrs L. Hovells had been unable to attend the meeting as they were at a Cabinet meeting at the County Council. Councillors Mrs J Chaplow and R

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Burnip were Chair and Vice-Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee at the County Council were also present.

J. Brock explained that the location of the new hospital would affect residents of Easington as well as Sedgefield as 15% of residents of East Durham used hospital services in Teesside. The key element of the Momentum project was around the siting of a new hospital. Two locations were being considered, one at Wynyard and one at Wolviston. The other aspect of the project was around the provision of services outside of hospitals and this would have an impact on services at Peterlee Hospital. The consultation period commenced on 2 June and ran until 1 September 2008. A Health Scrutiny Joint Committee had been established to respond to the initial consultation and a protocol for joint scrutiny arrangements had been previously circulated.

A Joint Scrutiny arrangement had been set up involving the four Councils of Hartlepool, Durham, Stockton and North Yorkshire and the Protocols for this had been circulated to Members. Meetings had been arranged and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would represent Durham County Council in making a response. Durham and Hartlepool, and Stockton and North Yorkshire, were holding separate meetings and then a joint response would be produced. The major issues raised by Members were accessibility and transport links to the new site and had requested more clarity on the evidence of how the sites had been chosen. County Durham's Integrated Transport Unit had raised concerns regarding the sustainability of future bus services. Community based provision in the Peterlee area and Peterlee Hospital, the development of the Healthworks and the GP led provision in Wingate had also been raised by Members as concerns.

Councillor Napier queried what scoping mechanism was used for the siting of the new hospitals, what the methodology had been used to choose the two sites and what strategic risk assessment had been carried out. J. Brock explained that consultants had been employed and the Head of Overview and Scrutiny at Durham County Council had been very keen to get the Integrated Transport Unit involved in the consultation.

Councillor Todd explained that the consultation process seemed to be confusing. He had attended a meeting at Peterlee Leisure Centre and the public were asking about primary care issues. The Strategic Health Authority had originally considered a new hospital a number of years ago. This had become contentious and the proposals had been withdrawn. Then came the Darzi Review and the refurbishments of Hartlepool and North Tees Hospitals, which had now come to the original proposal that had been put forward by the Strategic Health Authority for a new hospital.

Councillor High referred to the meeting that had taken place in Gully House in Wingate and explained that no District Councillor had been made aware of the meeting and that there should be a process in place where they were consulted. David Gallagher explained that this was a separate consultation for a Health Centre in Easington or Wingate.

(ii) **County Durham PCT - Consultation on Proposals for Improved Access to GP Services in County Durham**

David Gallagher, Director of Corporate Strategies, Services and Relations was in attendance to discuss the consultation and proposals for improved access to GP services in County Durham.

David Gallagher acknowledged that there was a lot of confusion around the consultation process on Momentum, and that of the improved access to GP services in County Durham. The role of County Durham PCT was to make sure they commissioned services to improve health, reduce health inequalities across the County and make sure that services were safe, sound and what was required. The service had to be the best for the people of County Durham.

There was a national initiative to improve access to primary care. The Department of Health had stipulated that every Primary Care Trust would have one "Darzi" Health Centre but this was not about introducing a poly-clinic. The Healthworks in Easington Colliery had no connection with Poly-clinics. The timescale and having services up and running was really tight and it was hoped that they would be in place by January/February 2009. There were some specific issues in Wingate and because of the existing Healthworks facility which was planned to extend and the health needs in the area, it was felt best placed to have a health centre in Easington Colliery.

David Gallagher explained that the key things about the Health Centre was that it would be GP led, would be available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, seven days per week and the public would not have to be registered with that GP to make use of the services.

It was explained that the consultation was on-going and he would ask his colleagues to ensure there were further opportunities to engage with the District Councillors and would raise this as a concern.

Councillor Todd queried if the proposals for improved access to GP services would have any impact on the St. Johns Square development or Peterlee Hospital. They would not affect the Seaham Scheme.

Councillor Napier explained that the art of communication was critical to the success of any organisation and the public needed to understand what the consultation was all about.

The Chair commented that the Urgent Care Centre at Peterlee was becoming very popular with members of the public who received excellent treatment.

David Gallagher referred to the Momentum Project, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust were looking to provide a single site hospital which also included bringing care closer to the community. County Durham PCT were working closely with Hartlepool and Stockton PCT's on this scheme. He added that he was part of the Momentum Board and the PCT had an interest in what happened with the hospital. The PCT were responsible for commissioning community services locally and looking to develop these services from existing centres such as Peterlee Hospital, Sedgefield Community Hospital, Richardson Hospital in Weardale,

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Chester-le-Street Hospital and Shotley Bridge. They plan to enhance the facilities which were already available there. The Urgent Care Centre in Peterlee had a number of facilities and they were working with the providers from the hospital to increase and improve services.

Residents of the District have access to three hospitals, Sunderland, Durham and through patient choice, access to any hospital.

At present, Peterlee Hospital was owned by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust and the County Durham PCT were in discussions with them regarding its possible purchase. Whatever the outcome of these discussions, they would be looking at how services could be improved which linked in very much to the Momentum Project. The key aim was to try and improve the health of the population, to develop community services and try to influence colleagues to get the transport system correct. There was a pilot scheme in Easington to make it easier to access Sunderland and Hartlepool Hospitals. If this was successful, the pilot would be rolled out across the rest of the County. The County Durham PCT were developing a strategic five year plan which followed on from the 'Big Conversation' events and they would continue with that type of approach.

Councillor Holmes queried how many beds would be made available in the new hospital as he had been advised that there would be individual beds rather than wards. He felt that this would be detrimental to people's health. D. Gallagher explained that County Durham relied more heavily on acute hospital services than other parts of the country. In previous years, the waiting times for some operations had been unacceptably long and now the majority of people were seen within 18-20 weeks. There was now a need for fewer big hospital buildings and there was a lot of evidence that old types of wards were not acceptable to people as they needed to have privacy and dignity.

Councillor Taylor-Gooby referred to Peterlee Hospital and queried if there was space on the existing site to provide a more wide range of services as it was currently congested. He was concerned that there would not be the range of facilities that was necessary.

David Gallagher explained that the expansion of the Peterlee Hospital would not affect the St John's Square development as it would take some of the pressure off Peterlee. Some work needed to be done around services in Peterlee including making the best use out of the hospital. The PCT were willing to look at alternatives if the hospital did not have the necessary space for services for healthcare.

Councillor Mrs Forster explained that the Easington PPI Forum had carried out a survey on transport. Transport needed to be looked at as there was no direct access from Seaham to Sunderland Hospital.

Councillor Mrs Connor explained that Darzi had reported that Hartlepool was to be a centre for women's health including breast reconstruction. She explained that she ran a breast support group and the consultant led follow up at Hartlepool was appalling. Appointments had been re-arranged which caused a lot of distress to ladies in her group. If the hospital moved further away then the appointment system had to improve.

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David Gallagher explained that one thing they were looking to do across the county was to have some consultants to come out to health centres for follow up appointments.

Councillor R Burnip explained that single person rooms cut down on infections. Health services were going back to a system that they had 20-30 years ago with more care in the community.

Councillor A Burnip explained that the County Durham Overview and Scrutiny Network had discussed concerns in relation to transport and accessibility which was now documented.

Councillor Todd explained that he welcomed the commitment to Primary Care services more so as there was no general hospital in the district. In the past, Easington had benefited from their deprivation levels and received additional investment and queried if this would be the case in future. D Gallagher explained that at Easington still had additional funding.

Councillor Stradling explained that Easington was in a unique situation as it was not near any acute hospital which made it critical to get the services right in relation to Peterlee Hospital. Transport and accessibility were also critical and the residents of East Durham should not suffer as a result of their geographical location.

Councillor Napier explained that there must be an improvement to access to health care at all levels and the public needed to be aware of what services were available. When the Urgent Care Centre opened in Seaham, residents who lived in the location did not know that it existed. He referred to the possibility of a health centre in Ryhope and queried if this could have a knock on effect on services that were to be provided in St John's Square.

D Gallagher explained that Sunderland had three Primary Care Centres and they were looking to have the one in south of Sunderland. Discussions were taking place as whether it would be sited in Ryhope or Hetton le Hole. If Ryhope was chosen then they wanted the services in St John's Square and Ryhope to complement each other and the County Durham Primary Care Trust would be working with Sunderland PCT to ensure this happened.

J Brock referred to the consultation and the joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committees response and queried if the Council wanted to respond separately or have their concerns included.

Members agreed that a response on the consultation process would be made by the Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their attendance.

**RESOLVED** that a response to the consultation be made by the Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee.

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