

COMMITTEE: SCRUTINY BOARD

DATE: 23rd OCTOBER 2007

SUBJECT: LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORKS (LINKs)

REPORT BY: HEAD OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

CONTACT OFFICER: JENNY GOFF (547661)

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL ✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL ✓	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE:

1. To inform members of the Scrutiny Board of impending legislative changes and their impact on Health and Social Care and their relationships with the third sector.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND

3. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, to establish LINKs is likely to receive royal assent within the next few months. Under this legislation Patients' Forums, currently organised by PCTs, and the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health will be abolished. In their place Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) will be established in each Local Authority Area with a range of new functions and powers.

REPORT

4. Each Local Authority will be expected to procure a host organisation to facilitate the Link and therefore will, in the next financial year receive appropriate funding, thought to be likely to be £150 000 but exact amount not yet known, to do so. In addition we have received £10 000 in this year to finance current activity such as publicity and the procurement process.
5. Local Involvement Networks will have the power to determine what areas of work they focus on locally within their statutory functions, which will be:
 - 5.1. promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services (Health and Social Care);
 - 5.2. obtaining the views of people about their needs for and experiences of local care services and making these views known to people responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising those services;
 - 5.3. making reports and recommendations about how local care services could be improved, to people responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising those services.
6. Particularly in relation to Health care, LINKs will cover children as well as adults. The regulations, expected shortly, will presumably specify their relationships with children's social care.
7. LINKs will have a set of 'powers' which will enable them to:
 - 7.1. enter specified types of premises and view the services provided as well as collecting the views and experiences of recipients of services;
 - 7.2. request information and receive a response within a specified timescale;
 - 7.3. make reports and recommendations and receive a response within a specified timescale; and
 - 7.4. refer matters to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and receive a response
8. LINKs are expected to have an open membership of both individuals and third sector organisations. In this way there will need to be mechanisms for working with the Local Strategic Partnership and within the ambit of the Compact.

9. Officers from Scrutiny, Procurement, Consultation and Adult Social Care are currently working on a procurement plan and a publicity strategy. This will include an open day for stakeholders and potential host organisations and publicity within Luton line and elsewhere. It is anticipated that the client department for the contract with the Host organisation will be Housing and Community Living. Current guidance is that commissioning should not be done through Adult Social Care, hence the involvement of Procurement.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

10. That the Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Luton Borough Council is required to procure a Host organisation.
12. This Committee after 1st April 2007 may receive referrals from the local LINK and will be required to respond.

(Report cleared by Vivienne Mercer, Legal Services on 10 October 2007)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. Procurement of the Host organisation and any subsequent expenditure must be contained within the funding to be made available to the Council from Central Government.

(This report has been agreed by the Finance Manager (Housing and Community Living) on 11 October 2007")

APPENDICES

14. None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

15. None