

Annual Report of the

Bedfordshire & Luton Joint NHS Scrutiny Committee

1. The Joint NHS Scrutiny Committee was established by resolutions of Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council at Their Annual General Meeting last year. The Committee has five members of Bedfordshire County Council, three members of Luton Borough Council and a member from each of Bedford Borough Council, Mid Beds District Council and South Bedfordshire District Council. The Chairman is a County Councillor and the Vice Chairman is a Luton Borough Councillor.
2. The Committee has met on seven occasions in the last year on
12th June 2003
11th July 2003
11th August 2003
20th November 2003
17th December 2003
16th March 2004
6th April 2004
3. Four members of the Committee, two from Luton Borough Council and two from Bedfordshire County Council also served on the Joint Committee established to consider the provision of Cancer Services at Mount Vernon Hospital. That separate Joint Committee also had members from Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils, and the London Boroughs of Brent (non-voting), Harrow and Hillingdon. It was the first such single issue, time limited, Joint Committee established under the Secretary of State's Direction of July 2003. This Joint Committee met in public session on three occasions,
30th July 2003
9th September 2003
15th December 2003
4. The main joint committee has had a full agenda with most meetings lasting most the day. It has considered the following issues:
 - Terms of Reference including membership and use of substitutes
 - Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – (Use of County Council's schemes)
 - Statutory Instrument 2002/3048: Regulations 2 and 4
 - DoH Policy Guidance and advice note on dealing with major service developments
 - Strategic Health Authority 'Investing in your Health' proposals involving,-
Presentation of written evidence from Community Groups
 - Presentation of oral evidence from Community Groups, Bedfordshire County Council and NHS representatives
Preparation and Submission of a written report to the Strategic Health Authority

- Support for the Committee
 - Staffing Support
 - Budget
 - Promoting the work of the Committee
- Briefing from Bedfordshire & Luton Community NHS Trust on its Business Plan, explaining its work and how it relates to Social Services
- Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Ambulance and Paramedic NHS Trust Annual Report
- Heartlands PCT GP and other related premises and accommodation strategy Papworth Hospital application for Foundation Hospital Status
- Addenbrookes Hospital application for Foundation Hospital Status
- A Briefing from the Regional Officer of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health
- Briefing on Patient and Public Involvement Project in Luton and Bedfordshire from representatives of the Rural Communities' Charity and Voluntary Action Luton, the bodies appointed to support the Patients' Forums in each of the NHS Bodies in Luton & Bedfordshire
- Consideration of the enforced partial closure of Appledore respite care home
- Presentation on Bedford Hospital Elective Surgery Centre
- Luton & Dunstable Hospital Application for Foundation Status
- Presentation on Papworth Hospital Relocation

- Mid and South Bucks Health Community – Shaping Health Services Consultation Document
- The Health of Bedfordshire & Luton with presentations from Luton PCT, Bedford PCT and Heartland PCT

5. The Committee has also received requests from the National Pharmacy Association, the Diabetes Society and the National Asthma Campaign to undertake studies using its Regulation 2 powers. It has agreed to consider these requests when it determines its future work programme

6. The Committee has also considered two Department of Health Consultation papers

- A consultation on action to improve people's health.

- Standards for Better Health

7. The officer advising the committee was also invited to participate in the Department of Health's Gateway Review of the Strategic Health Authority's "Investing in Your Health" Strategy. The Gateway Review is the Department's appraisal of the strategy before the individual elements of it are submitted for funding approval be it through direct funding or through the PFI route.

8. The Committee has a full programme of meetings for the coming year and will need to respond to a number of statutory consultations by local NHS Bodies including:

6 th April	10.am – 1pm CR1
18 th May	10.am – 4pm CR1
21 st June	10.am – 4pm CR1
16 th July	10.am – 4pm CR1
22 nd September	10.am – 1.30pm CR1
21 st October	10.am – 4pm CR1
17 th November	10.am – 1.30pm CR1
6 th December	10.am – 4pm CR1
13 th January 05	TBC
16 th February 05	TBC
16 th March 05	TBC
13 th April 05	TBC

The Committee's Work Programme

7. Following correspondence with the local NHS Bodies, the following is a list of the Regulation 4 consultations that the Joint Committee will be expected to respond to;

- a) Development of Community Diagnostic & Treatment Centres - Heartlands PCT - January 2004 onwards
- b)) Developing New Out of Hours Services - All PCTs – January 2004 onwards
- c) Establishment of a new Surgi-Centre - All PCTs & both Acute Trusts – February 2004 onwards
- d) Reprovision of Services on the North Wing site – Bedford PCT and Bedford Hospital NHS Trust – May 2004
- e) Establishing a Partnership Trust – Bedfordshire & Luton Community NHS Trust - June 2004 onwards
- e) Closure of Appledore and the Strategic Review of Respite Care – Bedford PCT and Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT – June 2004
- f) Investing in Your Mental Health - Mental Health & Learning Disability Strategy – Strategic Health Authority - ?Mid 2004?
- g) Investing in Your Health – All NHS Organisations - Ongoing

The Committee will recognise that in some case the start date for some of these consultations has already slipped while others may be added into the list later in the year.

In addition, but not under Regulation 4, there will be consultations about:

- h) Securing Foundation Trust Status – Luton & Dunstable Hospital NHS Trust – May 2004 onwards but with earlier discussions about governance models.

At its meeting in April the Committee was briefed on the health of Luton & Bedfordshire drawing on the work of the Directors of Public Health (or their equivalents). This will set the need, the urgency and the framework for the Committee undertaking any Regulation 2, “own initiative”, studies.

Of particular interest to the two Social Services Authorities is the proposed Learning Disability and Mental Health Strategic Review.

9. The Committee is represented on the DoH/Centre for Public Scrutiny Health Scrutiny Practitioners Group and on the Health & Social Care Reference Group established by the NHS to consider the Health and Social Care Implications of the Sustainable Communities Plan.

10. The Committee and the two principal authorities expressed their concerns about the lack of funding from Central Government for the costs of operating the Joint Committee. The costs of operating the committee have been shared between Luton and Bedfordshire on a demographically proportional basis, with Luton paying c£10,000 and the County Council c£20,000. The Borough and District Councils have not yet contributed to the cost of the committee and this is a matter that the two authorities intend to address through the Bedfordshire and Luton LGA. The costs of operating the Mount Vernon Joint Committee were shared between the seven participating authorities with each authority contributing in the order of £2,400.

11. The work on Mount Vernon was ground-breaking and DoH Ministers and the Senior Civil Servants followed the progress of that Joint Committee with great interest. The County Council's officer was the principal adviser to the Joint Committee and has since spoken on the conference circuit and advised both the LGA and the DoH on issues associated with the operation of such joint committees.

12. The Committee believes that it has made a good start to its work. During the past year the Committee has benefited from the active involvement of senior colleagues from the local NHS Bodies who, despite busy schedules, have given generously of their time and a proper and cordial relationship has been established. For that the Committee would like to place on record its gratitude. Equally, from the letters of appreciation that the committee and its officers have received from senior figures in the NHS locally, it appears that the committee's work is appreciated by those it is scrutinising. Finally the Committee would like to thank the officers from Bedfordshire and Luton Councils who have ably supported it during the past year.

13. The regulations that the committee is operating under provide for it to submit reports and its responses to statutory consultations to a wide range of stakeholders, including local MPs and the Executives of the parent Councils. The Committee will continue to forward its work to those stakeholders.

David Reedman - Chairman

John Titmuss - Vice Chairman

Bedfordshire & Luton NHS Scrutiny Joint Committee