

**AGENDA ITEM**

**COMMITTEE:** SCRUTINY BOARD  
**DATE:** 8TH MARCH 2005  
**SUBJECT:** HEALTH SCRUTINY UPDATE  
**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** GEOFF BOCUTT 01582 546073

**IMPLICATIONS:**

<b>LEGAL</b>		<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>
<b>EQUALITIES</b>		<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	✓	<b>CONSULTATIONS</b>
<b>STAFFING</b>	✓	<b>OTHER</b>

**WARDS AFFECTED: NONE**

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**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the work of the joint health scrutiny committee, to provide information about the health scrutiny arrangements for the Board's consideration and to ask the Board to make a recommendation to the Council in relation to the terms of reference of the joint health scrutiny committee established with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. **Scrutiny Board is recommended to consider the report and whether they wish to see any changes made to the health scrutiny arrangements for Luton.**

## **BACKGROUND**

3. At the meeting of the Board on 31<sup>st</sup> January I described the arrangements for health scrutiny and provided an update on the work of the Bedfordshire and Luton Joint NHS Scrutiny Committee. Members commented on the different arrangements that apply in Hertfordshire and I undertook to raise the matter with my counterparts in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils.
4. I also described the arrangements that had been made to form a joint health scrutiny committee with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils and the purposes for which it had been set up.

## **REPORT**

### **Bedfordshire and Luton Joint NHS Scrutiny Committee**

5. The Committee met on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005 when they considered:
  - An oral report from the Chair on the Eastern Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs Conference
  - The notes of the meeting of the Eastern Counties Health Scrutiny Chairs which had been attended by the Chair and the Vice Chair
  - News that Bedford Hospital is to be a candidate for the next wave of Foundation Trusts.
  - Investing in Your Mental Health – briefing on progress in preparation for the consultation
  - Treatment Centres – a paper published by the Department of Health
  - Specialist Surgical Cancer Centres in Hertfordshire and South Bedfordshire – a consultation by the Mount Vernon Cancer Network about proposed interim arrangements pending the development of a new cancer centre and hospital at Hatfield
  - Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust Recovery Plan
6. The next meeting of the committee will be on 16<sup>th</sup> March at 10.00 am at County Hall, Bedford.

### **Health Scrutiny Arrangements**

7. The arrangements in Bedfordshire are that there is a single joint committee formed by the two principal authorities with representation from the three districts in the County area plus two non-voting representatives from the patients' forums. This arrangement was agreed upon as the least cost option when it became apparent that there would be no Government funding for local authority scrutiny of local health services. The original proposal was for a co-ordinating committee with a number of 'trust facing'

panels with membership of each panel determined according to the catchment of the trust they would be scrutinising. For example the panel scrutinising the Luton Primary Care Trust would have consisted solely of Luton Borough Council Members. The main reason this arrangement was not proceeded with was financial but there would also have been an issue about the numbers of Members involved in health scrutiny and whether that structure would have been sustainable. The current arrangements provide for the Borough Council to be fully involved in the work of NHS Trusts where their boundaries or catchment areas straddle the Borough boundary, in particular the Luton and Dunstable Hospital and the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Trust. Equally the arrangement is efficient in that the relevant NHS bodies have a single Health Overview & Scrutiny body to relate to.

8. The arrangements in Hertfordshire are that routine scrutiny of the services provided by or commissioned by the primary care trusts are delegated to district based joint county & district council committees overseen by a County Health Scrutiny Committee that also deals with county wide issues. The County committee will decide on a case by case basis whether to delegate the scrutiny of any consultation in respect of substantial variations or developments in services – this had been done on a “global” basis for any changes to individual or groups of GP practises. The power to make a referral to the Secretary of State has not been delegated and only the County committee can do this, but the joint PCT scrutiny committees can request the County committee to do so. The benefits of this approach are that it allows local issues to be scrutinised at a local level whilst spreading the resource implications between the County & District Councils. It also retains a strategic overview of whether any consultation should be referred to the Secretary of State.

#### The Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

9. As I reported at the last meeting this joint committee met on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2004 to consider mainly procedural matters and the arrangements for the committee to respond to the statutory consultation ‘Investing in your Mental Health’. Attached as an appendix are the minutes of that meeting which include the terms of reference of the committee. The Board has already recommended the Council to approve the arrangements for the committee and to determine the membership of the committee however it is necessary for the Council also to approve the terms of reference of the committee. The Board is therefore asked to recommend the Council to accept and approve the attached terms of reference.

## **PROPOSAL/OPTION**

10. The Board is asked to consider whether there are any improvements that should be considered in relation to the arrangements for health scrutiny within Bedfordshire and Luton.
11. The Board is also asked to recommend the Council to accept and approve the terms of reference of the Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

## **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

12. Support for the Bedfordshire and Luton joint committee is provided by the former Assistant Chief Executive of the County Council on a consultancy basis and the cost is shared on a proportional basis with the County Council. If different arrangements were to be implemented which could involve supporting a local health scrutiny committee for Luton there would be both staffing and financial implications for the Council

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. See staffing implications above.

## **APPENDIX**

Minutes of the meeting of the Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton Health Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2004

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

Report Ref: SB/1/05/8.7

Scrutiny Board Minute 10/05