

AGENDA ITEM

COMMITTEE: SCRUTINY BOARD

DATE: 31ST JANUARY 2005

SUBJECT: HEALTH SCRUTINY UPDATE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the work of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committees

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **Scrutiny Board is recommended to note the report.**

BACKGROUND

3. Principal local authorities, that is to say those with responsibility for social services, were given the power to scrutinise local health services with effect from January 2003. Rather than undertake this responsibility separately it was decided to form a joint committee with the County Council. The Council's representation on the joint committee is currently Councillors Abid, Timoney and Titmuss. The Council also has the right to representation on joint committees formed with other local authorities to

scrutinise proposals for changes to health services that affect patients from a wider area. The normal practice is to form a committee consisting of two scrutiny members from each participating local authority. The Council recently took a decision that where such joint committees were formed in future the Members from Luton would be the Labour and Liberal Democrat Members of the Luton and Bedfordshire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

REPORT

4. The standing joint committee with the County Council meets on a monthly basis and attached as an appendix is a summary of the work undertaken by the committee over the last several months. The experience of the committee has been that it has been inundated by requests from NHS bodies to examine and respond to consultations about substantial changes or developments and has had little opportunity to examine topics of its own choosing. The development of a work programme for the committee is dependent upon information from the NHS trusts within Bedfordshire about the number and scale of such consultations over the next year and the joint committee intends to use the support promised from the CfPS to help with this task.
5. A special joint committee with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils has recently been formed and met for the first time on 21st December 2004. The primary purpose of the committee is to respond to the consultation on the development and improvement of mental health services shortly to be undertaken by the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority. However the terms of reference of the committee empower it to consider and respond to a consultation by a local health body about any substantial development or variation to health services affecting all three authorities areas. The work to be undertaken by the committee includes:
 - Monitoring the implementation of 'Investing in Your Health'
 - Responding to the consultation on 'Investing in Your Mental Health'
 - Responding to consultations about the health implications of the growth area proposals affecting the area
 - Scrutinising the work of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Ambulance and Paramedic NHS Trust
6. The first meeting was largely procedural since when the consultation on mental health services has been postponed until the early summer, so the arrangements for future meetings are uncertain at present.
7. An invitation has been received for Luton to be represented on the special joint committee that is being formed to respond to the consultation on the

proposed move of Papworth Hospital to Addenbrokes in Cambridge and our position has been reserved. This consultation has also been postponed.

8. Last Autumn a group was formed consisting of the Chairs of the Health Scrutiny committees of the County Councils in the Eastern Region. At the first meeting our colleagues from Bedfordshire suggested that the membership of the group should be extended to the unitary Councils in the region as they also have health scrutiny powers and responsibilities. This was accepted and Councillor Titmuss (as the Vice Chair of the joint committee) and I attended the second meeting that took place in Cambridge on 7th January. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum for exchanging experiences of health scrutiny and to learn from best practice. Councillor Titmuss had asked that the issue of the relative efficiency of surgicentres be discussed and, coincidentally, there had been a discussion on the Radio 4 Today programme that same morning arising from the publication of a report by the Department of Health. The outcome of the discussion was that colleagues elsewhere in the region had not encountered this issue.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

9. The Board is asked to note the work being undertaken on the scrutiny of local health services.

APPENDIX

Bedfordshire & Luton Joint Health Scrutiny Committee - Summary

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

10. Reports to and minutes of the Bedfordshire and Luton Joint Health Scrutiny Committee