

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 1 April 2008
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Tom McGee (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Roy Driver (Vice-Chair); Councillors Walter Brett, Sue Ingham, Bryan Leck, John Pantall, John Smith and Craig Wright.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 19 February, 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made

3. CALL-IN

There were no items to consider.

4. ANNUAL HEALTHCHECK 2007/8 – TRUST DECLARATIONS

In 2005 the Healthcare Commission created a new approach to assessing and reporting on the performance of PCT and NHS Trusts. The annual health check replaced star ratings and required NHS Trusts to produce a yearly self-assessment. Under this approach all PCT and NHS Trusts were required to ask relevant health overview and scrutiny committees to comment on their performance against the 24 NHS core standards.

Reports containing support information to be declared to the Healthcare Commission for both Stockport PCT and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust were submitted (Copies of which had been circulated). The Committee was informed that Stockport PCT expected to declare compliance on all standards (with one exception) and the NHS Trust were expected to declare compliance on all standards.

Councillors asked a number of questions with regard to the refurbishment of PCT Healthcare Centres, infection control and human rights with specific regard to residents within Council and private accommodation. The timing of the submission of these reports was explained following a further question from a Councillor.

The Committee recognised that their engagement in the process of submitting comments on NHS performance against the standards may be improved by focusing on a small sample of the standards and that in future consideration could be given to which of these standards should be looked at the start of the year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that both the Stockport PCT and NHS Trust be informed of the Committee's approval of the positive relationship between

both Trusts and the Committee and that no further comments would be made by the Committee on the Trust's declared performance against the standards for the current municipal year.

5. DENTAL HEALTHCARE IN STOCKPORT

A representative of the Chief Executive, Stockport PCT submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing an overview of dental healthcare provision and access to dentistry care in Stockport. Also circulated by way of background information, were the findings of a study carried out by Stockport Primary Care Trust Patient and Public Involvement Forum in 2007.

It was reported that an estimated 63% of Stockport residents had regular access to an NHS dentist and that overall Stockport residents enjoyed better oral healthcare than the national averages. However, it was recognised that there were gaps in access to NHS dentistry and it was reported that an equivalent of seven dentists had been commissioned to practice in perceived shortfall areas of Stockport. It was hoped that this would improve the statistics further. In response to Councillor's concerns with regard to the efficiency of the current out of hours service, it was reported that the opening hours would be extended from 1st June and that this would improve efficiency.

Councillors also expressed concerns with regard to the deterioration in the figures from Stockport children from the age of 5 to 12 and suggested that this could be investigated and considered further through the submission of a future report to the Committee. Other key issues identified were the aging population, the provision of school dentists and water fluoridation. The Committee expressed unanimous support to the concept of water fluoridation and commented on the need to pursue its introduction at the optimum time by a recommendation in favour of fluoridation to the Council from this Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the issue of water fluoridation be reconsidered at the most appropriate time to be identified by the Director of Public Health and in line with the Strategic Health Authority regional consultation.

(3) That a future report be submitted containing information on the significant difference between oral health of Stockport children at the ages of 5 and 12.

6. AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

A representative of the Chief Executive, Stockport PCT submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which updated position as of March 2008 with regard to new Audiology patients and the swap to the digital hearing aid reassessment waiting list in Stockport.

The Committee commended the progress made and recognised the improvements in the service. In addition, an individual issue relating to the availability of batteries for hearing aids from GPs Surgeries was raised.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. CHILDHOOD OBESITY - COMPLETED SCRUTINY REVIEW: PROGRESS UPDATE

A representative of the Chief Executive, Stockport PCT submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing progress made on outstanding actions agreed in response to the recommendations of the Social Care and Healthy Scrutiny Committee on completion of its review on Childhood Obesity in April 2005. Childhood obesity data for 2006/7, including figures collated by ward, is also circulated.

It was reported that the latest figures had shown a decrease in childhood obesity in Stockport, but this could be as a result of a change in the way the data had been collated. The Committee was also informed that the figures for Stockport were favourable when compared to the national average and Councillors asked questions with regard to the take-up of school meals, the link between obesity and deprivation and methods of obesity reduction.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted and that the issue remains open for further consideration at a later date.

8. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S 17th ANNUAL REPORT

Each year the Director of Public Health submits a statutory report regarding the state of public health in Stockport. Stockport PCT commissioned the annual report which was produced by the Director of Public Health in his independent professional advocacy role.

The report and recommendations would be presented to the Executive, giving Executive Members the opportunity to reflect upon progress within their own portfolio of responsibility and collectively agree on a written response to the Director of Public Health's recommendations.

The Committee received copies of the 17th Annual report for Stockport (copies of which had been circulated) and considered the various recommendations contained therein.

The Director of Public Health made a number of comments with regard to key areas of his report with particular regard to healthy lifestyles, smoking, obesity, sexual health and mental wellbeing.

The Committee made a number of comments with particular regard to the need to focus upon clear targets within three or four existing major areas which were under current consideration in order to successfully implement agreed initiatives. They also commented on the need for a coordinated approach from the Executive on various lifestyle issues which cut across the remit of various Council portfolios and services in order to ensure that a concerted framework and approach was achieved.

RESOLVED – (1) That the recommendations contained within the 17th Annual Public Health Report for Stockport be commended to the Council's Executive for approval.

(2) That the Executive be recommended to consider adopting a coordinated approach on matters which cut across the remit of various Council portfolios and services in order to ensure that a framework exists for approaching and implementing cross cutting issues and recommendations such as those contained in the 17th Annual Public Health Report.

9. SCRUTINY REVIEWS 2008/9 – PROPOSED SCRUTINY CONFERENCE

A representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy, Performance & Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated). The purpose of this report was to consider the process to be adopted to enable Scrutiny Committees to agree topics for review in 2008/09 and support the development of work programmes for individual scrutiny committees for the next Municipal Year.

Concern was expressed at the lack of available dates available in order to arrange a Scrutiny Conference between Annual Council and the first meeting of the Committee in the new municipal year. However, the Committee also recognised the importance of early progress with the scrutiny reviews and agreed on the need for an alternative approach in order to pursue this.

RESOLVED – (1) That the need for an alternative approach to the arrangement and approval of scrutiny reviews for 2008/09 be approved.

(2) That consideration be given to the advanced setting of future work programmes and that in doing so, the views and recommendations of non-executive Members within the appropriate Stockport Health Organisations should be sought.

10. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy, Performance & Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out, forward plan items which fell within the remit of the Committee and progress with the resolutions made by the Committee at previous meetings during the current municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm.