

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 26 May 2009

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Tom McGee (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Hazel Lees (Vice-Chair); Councillors Walter Brett, Chris Gordon, Sylvia Humphreys, Bryan Leck, June Somekh and Craig Wright.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 31st March 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. CALL-IN

There were no items to consider.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 18TH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Consideration was given to the recommendations within the Director of Public Health's Annual Report commissioned by Stockport Primary Care Trust (PCT), and the Council's response to that report (copies of which had been circulated).

At its meeting held on 17 February 2009 (Minute 4 refers) the Health Scrutiny Committee commented on a draft overview of the Annual Report. The Committee was invited to comment on the final version of the Annual Report and submit comments to the Executive for inclusion in the Council's response.

The Director of Public Health reported that the Committee's comments had proved useful and many had influenced the recommendations contained within the final report. He commented that the Council's response had been detailed and accepted their recommendations as they reflected the hard work currently being undertaken.

Councillors made a number of comments with particular regard to the need for both Stockport Council and the NHS to set the standard in respect of employment and the provision of support and training opportunities for people with mental health needs. In addition, as an employer, Stockport Council could consider broadening its remit for the development of occupational health services to staff. Effective measures in respect of health programmes were needed together with recognition of positive steps forward such as the employment volunteer scheme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. DIABETES – UPDATE REPORT ON NSF IMPLEMENTATION

A report of Stockport PCT was considered (copies of which had been circulated) in respect of the diabetes services currently provided in Stockport, together with an assessment of progress towards implementing the Department of Health's National Service Framework for Diabetes introduced in 2003.

This item was considered following a request by Diabetes UK, that the Committee should consider carrying out a review of diabetes services in Stockport. This suggestion was made as a consequence of the Department of Health's recent report 'The National Services Framework for Diabetes Five Years on...are we half way there?' The Committee was informed of (i) Stockport's progress towards implementing the Framework and (ii) services available to support people in Stockport who suffered from diabetes.

The Committee was informed that most children's services in Stockport were hospital based, whilst the majority of care for adults was out in the community. In addition, most standards were progressing towards delivery, although there were shortfalls in areas such as care home and psychological services, together with a lack of provision of dieticians. In addition, whilst screening practices had improved, these needed to be more robust in the future. In response, it was reported that ways of increasing support to sufferers was being considered. These included the provision of 'telephonic' services and possible reorganisation in order to increase capacity.

Councillors made a number of comments with particular regard to the need to identify increased provision of dedicated specialist nurses in order to look after people in care homes on a daily basis. In addition, the need for specific training and awareness promotion for a wide range of health workers was stated.

In response to Councillor's questions, it was noted that the retina screening process had helped identify diabetes in patients at an early stage and the need to target services in deprived areas was being considered. The new centre at St Thomas's would help take services to areas where people were located.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PODIATRY SERVICES IN STOCKPORT

A representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy & Governance) submitted the draft final report of the Scrutiny Review of Podiatry Services (copies of which had been circulated).

At its review selection meeting in June 2008, the Health Scrutiny Committee considered podiatry services as a possible topic for review following its suggestion by Marple Area Committee. It was agreed that, instead of the Committee carrying out an in-depth scrutiny review, a working group be appointed to consider issues relating to podiatry services in Stockport with particular regard to older people and service provision. The recommendations of the working group were considered.

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The Committee commented that the Podiatry Service met the needs of the people in Stockport to an excellent standard and that the recommendations of the review were both comprehensive and appropriate. However, it was suggested that a further recommendation could be included in respect of early diagnostic issues relating to a reduction in DNA (did not attend) rates. In addition, Councillors commented that the Podiatry Service could be used as a benchmark and should be promoted better in order to inform the public of the services available. It was suggested that people who used the service were likely to benefit from an early diagnosis of other health problems.

In response to Councillor's questions, the Committee was informed that the Podiatry Team continued to look for ways to improve and evolve the service and that GP training would be encompassed within the 'Education for Everyone' scheme.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Health Scrutiny Committee congratulates the Podiatry Service for its excellent performance.

(2) That the Health Scrutiny Committee registers its concern with regard to the Podiatry Service's long-term capacity to manage the increasing demand for podiatry whilst retaining current standards of service delivery; particularly in light of the ageing population, the increase in cases of diabetes and likely staff retirements.

(3) That the Health Scrutiny Committee registers its concern over the future level of funding for Podiatry Services, particularly in light of the increasing demand for podiatry and other long-term challenges the Service faces.

(4) That the Primary Care Trust be recommended to undertake education of GPs to increase their awareness of the work carried out by the Podiatry Service and its value to health in general.

(5) That the Health Scrutiny Committee be recommended to undertake a further review of the Podiatry Service in three to five years to evaluate any change in the current excellent performance of the Service

(6) That the above recommendations of the Review be sent to Stockport PCT for a response.

7. HOUSE OF COMMONS HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT ON HEALTH INEQUALITIES THIRD REPORT OF SESSION 2008/9

Consideration was given to the House of Commons Health Committee's report on Health Inequalities (copies of which had been circulated).

Concern regarding progress towards meeting the Government's 2010 targets to reduce health inequalities prompted the House of Common's Health Committee to hold an inquiry to discover what the Government could do to improve outcomes.

The Director of Public Health attended the meeting and discussed the findings of the report and commented that many national issues were replicated locally. He emphasised the need for caution in respect of the redistribution of funding to

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deprived areas as polarisation should be taken into account. In addition, he saw the main issue as being the equitable distribution of opportunities.

The Committee was informed that a précis of the report would be available and this would be circulated to all members of the Committee in due course.

Councillors asked a number of questions with particular regard to:

- The loss of continuity and disruption caused by unnecessary re-organisation of services and Government departments.
- The current lack of practice in respect of the referral of smokers to GPs for advice and treatment to help people stop smoking.
- The need to address cycling issues including consideration of the possible introduction of comprehensive and integrated cycle lanes in the borough.
- The need for social marketing to be targeted to meet people's needs through a comprehensive programme.
- The effects of a shift of targeted funding to deprived areas and the effects this would have on Stockport.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that the Chair of the House of Commons Health Committee be requested to comment on this Committee's concerns with particular regard to issues in respect of polarisation.

8. HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE POSSIBLE SCRUTINY REVIEWS 2009/10

All Scrutiny Committee Members were invited to a special 'work programme' event held on Monday 27 April 2009. The purpose of the event was to meet with Service Directors and key partners to discuss service performance and priorities, with a view to identifying potential scrutiny review topics for 2009/10.

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy and Governance) was considered (copies of which had been circulated) providing further details in respect of the topics identified for the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair proposed a different approach in respect of a possible review of older people's experiences of health services in Stockport, whereby members of the Panel might interview older people with a view to gaining first-hand information which might not otherwise be identified.

RESOLVED – (1) That approval be given that the first scrutiny review of the 2009/10 municipal year be in respect of older people's experiences of health services and that the following Councillors be appointed to the review panel:-

Councillors Tom McGee; Hazel Lees, Walter Brett, Chris Gordon, Sylvia Humphreys, Bryan Leck, June Somekh and Craig Wright.

(2) That the second scrutiny review of the 2009/10 municipal year be in respect of the audit of respite care, including provision by the voluntary sector and that the following Councillors be appointed to serve on the panel:

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Councillors Hazel Lees, Chris Gordon, Craig Wright, Christine Corris and Sylvia Humphreys.

(3) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to produce a project plan for the Committee's consultation with older people, including identification of aims and objectives, methodology, suitable participants and an appropriate timescale; and liaises with stakeholders and Committee Members in order to make arrangements for carrying out consultation during June and July 2009.

9. RÉSUMÉ OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

RESOLVED - That the résumé of the meeting held on 23rd March, 2009 be noted.

10. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy & Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Committee's next three meetings, Forward Plan items which fell within the remit of the Committee and progress with the resolutions made at previous meetings during the current municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm.