

CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Health Scrutiny Committee – Report to SMC 26 June 2006

This committee of the Council was formed in May 2006 and continues the work of the former Social Services and Health Scrutiny Board. There is a slightly changed emphasis in that its primary role is to scrutinise (NHS) health provision for York residents and the scrutiny of health provision by Adult Social Services takes place as part of this.

Since presenting its report on a scrutiny of Services for Care Leavers to Scrutiny Management Committee, the committee has considered several significant changes which have taken place or have been commenced within the NHS.

The Board responded to consultations on the reconfiguration of the SHA, Ambulance (where we offered the same response as N Yorks and E Riding) and Primary Care Trusts. The result was largely as expected – there would be no change to the proposals. The SHA and Ambulance Trust changes take effect from 1 July, while the PCT changes are effective from 1 October.

The Board confirmed its earlier comments on the draft NHS, Ambulance and Primary Care Trusts' "health check" reports (with one minor change for the PCT report) when the final reports were submitted recently. Having been through the process of making comments on the draft and final reports this year, we are in a better position to deal effectively with next year's reports.

The PCT's financial recovery plan is a big issue and the way in which services are reconfigured as a result of this will have an impact on any aspect which the committee scrutinises in future. So far there has been a lot of news about the targets which the PCT has to meet (they include repaying the historic deficit, achieving balance in the current year, a 2.5% levy on income by the SHA, making 2.5% 'Gershon' cost improvement programme efficiency savings), but little about the thrust of their actual recovery plans. Some changed commissioning intentions have been signalled by the PCT but the impact and financial implications of these has yet to be assessed.

The first meeting of the new committee has agreed to make a formal scrutiny of the recovery plan; some very technical details of the plan (referral advice to GPs) emerged at the meeting but we will not be able to do anything further until the plan is made public after the next PCT Board meeting on 18th July. Hopefully, that will give us some actual material to consider.

Ian Cuthbertson

Chair
18 June 2006