
MEETING	HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	9 OCTOBER 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS CUTHBERTSON (Chair), GREENWOOD, FRASER, LOOKER, *MOORE and *KING (substituting for Cllr Kind)
	<i>[Note: Cllrs Moore and King were present for agenda items 1-5 only; minutes 19-23 refer]</i>
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS KIND and BRADLEY
IN ATTENDANCE	MIKE SHANAHAN (Yorkshire Ambulance Service) JIM EASTON (Chief Executive, York Hospitals NHS Trust) BILL HODSON (Director of Housing and Adult Social Services)

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited Members to declare at this point any interests they might have in the business on the agenda. The following interests were declared:

- Cllr Fraser – a personal, non prejudicial interest in the business generally, insofar as it related to staff issues, as a retired member and employee of UNISON.
- Cllr Moore – a personal, non prejudicial interest in the business generally, in view of his wife's employment in a GP's practice.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee, held on 4 September 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

21. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

22. YORKSHIRE AMBULANCE SERVICE COMMUNITY RESPONDERS SERVICE

Members considered a report which informed them about the Community Responders scheme run by Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS). Mike Shanahan, of the YAS, was in attendance to provide further information and answer Members' questions on the scheme.

Community Responders (CRs) were volunteer members of the public who could be called by the YAS to attend medical emergencies in their local community before the ambulance arrived. They received ongoing training and support from YAS, as well as attending an initial training course. The aim was to sustain life in the short term, in cases such as cardiac arrest and choking, until the ambulance service could take over. There were currently two groups of CRs in the City of York area, based in Bishopthorpe and Strensall. Both groups had proved successful and YAS were keen to expand the scheme.

In response to questions from Members, Mike Shanahan confirmed that:

- CRs operated only within their local “catchment” area and attended in their own vehicles under normal driving conditions
- An ambulance was also called to the scene in every case
- Training for CRs could take up to 4 months, depending on availability, and included scene management as well as medical training
- A didactic approach was taken to training, to ensure that CRs did not attempt to act beyond what they were trained to do
- The scheme focused on areas with a large number of cases and longer ambulance response times. In terms of expanding the scheme, Dunnington was one potential area of operation
- Although the scheme was helping the YAS to meet its targets for response times, quality of patient care was still paramount.

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted and that Mike Shanahan be invited to attend a future meeting in due course to provide an update on plans to expand the scheme.

23. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY OF NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK PRIMARY CARE TRUST’S MEASURES TO RESTORE FINANCIAL BALANCE

Members considered a report which provided an update on issues that they might wish to consider as part of their programme of work on this scrutiny review. It was noted that the Selby and York Primary Care Trust (PCT) was now part of the new North Yorkshire and York PCT, which was still awaiting the appointment of a non-Executive Director.

Jim Easton, the Chief Executive of York Hospitals NHS Trust, was in attendance to provide further information on proposals to close 60 beds at York Hospital and to answer Members’ questions on this issue. He emphasised that the proposals did not involve changes to the services provided to patients – such changes would require formal consultation. Instead, they resulted from plans to increase the provision of day surgery in appropriate cases, following the recent opening of a new day surgery unit and the planned provision of 22 new “23-hour” beds before Christmas. Shorter hospital stays meant better services for patients and a lower risk of infection, as well as enabling the reduction of in-patient beds. In response to Members’ questions, Mr Easton confirmed that:

- The closures would not reduce the level of care provided to patients

- Follow up care from day surgery was the responsibility of Community Nursing Services. However, it was recognised that pre-operative assessments (including the patient's social circumstances) were vital in selecting appropriate cases for day surgery in the first place
- There would be no redundancies at the hospital, although some vacancies would not be filled
- These proposals would make a fairly small contribution to the PCT's savings targets, compared to the proposals for emergency care
- Discussions were ongoing with the PCT with regard to the hospital's role in managing chronic conditions and providing rehabilitation
- With reference to recent reports in the Press, the decision to put out to tender the non-emergency ambulance service had been taken following a review of the service. The current providers had been involved in discussions and were expected to submit a bid.

Bill Hodson, Director of Housing and Adult Social Services, commented on the PCT's proposals to reduce the number of Intermediate Care beds available across the City. He regretted the loss of beds but was relieved that most of the beds at Archways Intermediate Care Unit would be retained. He stressed the need for all parties to continue to communicate with each other on the provision of care and noted that the Council's policy of moving from acute to community provision was clearly in line with that of the Trust.

The Chair reported that the Chief Executive and Chair of the new PCT would be visiting the Guildhall next Tuesday and had offered to meet representatives of Health Scrutiny.

RESOLVED: (i) That the information provided be noted and that Members continue their scrutiny of this area.

(ii) That representatives of the new North Yorkshire and York PCT be invited to provide an update at the next meeting of the Committee on the PCT's financial recovery plan and clinical thresholds guidelines.

(iii) That the Chair, Cllr Fraser and the Scrutiny Officer meet with the Chief Executive and Chair of the new PCT between 1 and 2 pm on 17 October and ask them to clarify the situation regarding the impact of the proposed bed closures on Community Nursing Services.

24. DENTAL SERVICES IN YORK

Members considered a report which informed them about NHS dental provision in York.

A written update on the service, provided by Kay Goodwin from the North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust, had been circulated to Members before the meeting. This explained the provisions of the new dental

contract, introduced on 1 April 2006, which gave PCTs responsibility for commissioning NHS dentistry in their local area.

RESOLVED: That the information provided by Kay Goodwin be noted and that further information be provided to Members at a future meeting to enable the Committee to consider and scrutinise the effects of the new contract on dental services in York.

25. HEALTH SCRUTINY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Members considered a report which confirmed arrangements for City of York's inclusion in the Health Scrutiny Support Programme.

City of York Council had been accepted on the scheme and allocated an advisor, Robin Stonebridge. Two sessions had been arranged, on 24 October and 22 November, which all members of Council were invited to attend. Details of the sessions were attached as Annex A to the report. Two or three further sessions would be arranged in the new year, according to Members' wishes.

RESOLVED: (i) That Members agree to take part in the Health Scrutiny Support Programme and that the dates of the sessions be noted.

(ii) That Robin Stonebridge be asked to provide some potential dates for further sessions early in 2007, the first date to be in late January and the second in late February or early March, and that the dates of these sessions then be finalised in consultation with Members via e-mail.

(iii) That consideration be given to selecting an alternative venue for these further sessions, away from the Guildhall.

26. URGENT BUSINESS - CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED REGULATIONS UNDER THE HEALTH BILL

Members considered a proposed response to consultation by the PCT on proposed regulations aimed at making enclosed public spaces and workplaces smoke free.

The Chair asked Members to consider this matter as urgent business, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, because the deadline for responses to this consultation had been reached.

An outline response had been prepared by the Chair and Cllr Fraser and copies were circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Chair and Cllr Fraser be authorised to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Committee.

I Cuthbertson, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.55 pm].