

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

19th January 2011

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Mrs. Farrington (Vice-Chairman in the Chair) and Councillors Atkin, Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Plenderleith.

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick and Mrs. Mead.

OS/25. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Jones (Chairman) (Conservative Group) and Councillor Lane (Labour Group).

OS/26. **HEALTH SCRUTINY REVIEW**

A report was submitted which reminded of the 2008 scrutiny review of NHS dentistry and out of hours service delivered at the Health Centre in Civic Way, Swadlincote. At the Scrutiny Focus Session and subsequent Committee Meeting in June 2010 there was further discussion about health scrutiny and an update was requested. An interim report was submitted to the 27th October Meeting and Members requested more specific details on the services delivered from the Health Centre. It was agreed that representatives of the PCT be invited to attend a Meeting and as a result the special Committee Meeting had been arranged. The Chairman welcomed Georgina Horobin of the Derbyshire County PCT and Jane Saunders from Derbyshire Community Health Services to the Meeting.

Members had been given the opportunity to submit questions ahead of the Meeting and these had been forwarded to the health representatives, to enable responses to be prepared. At the Meeting, a further copy of the questions was circulated, together with an initial response received from NHS Derbyshire County on the frequency of services delivered from the Swadlincote Health Centre.

Mrs. Horobin addressed the Committee and advised that statistics had been prepared on the number of patients accessing services at the Swadlincote Clinic. These would be available following the Meeting and further information was still being collated, which would be forwarded to Members. She referred particularly to information received from Derbyshire Health United on the monthly patient numbers using out of hours services at the Health Centre. Further statistics were available on district nurse activity, podiatry activity, continence activity and health visitor activity for the period April to December 2010.

Mrs. Horobin then went through the questions submitted by Members and provided responses. It was noted that Keith Mann, the dental commissioner was also due to have been present. In his absence, it would not be possible to respond to the questions on dentistry at the Meeting, but an undertaking was given to respond to the questions submitted. A copy of the responses provided at the Meeting is shown at Annexe A to the Minutes.

Members took the opportunity to submit additional questions and it was pointed out that specific statistics had been sought on the number of patients accessing services at the Swadlincote Health Centre. There was discussion about out of hours services and how people became aware of the services delivered at the Swadlincote Health Centre. When people contacted their own doctor outside of normal surgery hours, they were automatically diverted to the out of hours number. There was also discussion about the current review of the NHS and the shift to GP commissioning from April 2012. This made it difficult to respond to the questions about provision of new services and threats to existing services. It had been hoped to have a GP commissioner present at the Meeting, but this had not proved possible. A Member referred to chronic lung disorders, which were a problem in the area due to its mining history and the ageing population. Service provision in Swadlincote was questioned and Mrs. Horobin agreed to pursue this with the Acute Health Trust and to submit further information. Questions were then submitted about counselling services and hearing aid services. The contributors explained that there were not enough clients to make the request for daily hearing aid services viable and it was noted that some service providers were voluntary. In response to the submitted question on establishing a permanent mammogram screening unit at the Centre, detail was provided on the building alterations that would be required, how the current service was delivered from the mobile unit over a six week period and an initiative to lower the age at which screening began, to target more of the female population. The points submitted about patients with mobility issues were acknowledged.

The health contributors were advised that a key issue arising from the 2008 review concerned communication. It was not perceived that communication had improved since the earlier review and with the changes being faced by the health sector it was felt that improved communication and consultation was required. It was acknowledged that engaging with the population was a key aspect of the commissioning regime. Members were sure that residents were not aware of the out of hours services delivered in Swadlincote and felt the District Council could help through its contacts with the voluntary sector and through other mechanisms. A Member reported that he would be submitting a number of other questions to the PCT after the Meeting.

Members discussed the way forward with this review area, acknowledging that it would need to be deferred until the new arrangements had been put into place. However, it was considered that health scrutiny could be considered at the annual Scrutiny Focus Session with a view to including a review area for the spring of 2012. The health representatives were thanked for their attendance.

It was agreed:-

- (1) To note the information submitted and that any further information received from the health sector be circulated to the Committee.**
- (2) That consideration be given to the inclusion of further health scrutiny review work at the annual Focus Session.**

G. FARRINGTON

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 5.50 p.m.