

## **Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - scrutiny of the proposal to amalgamate the South Bucks and Stoke Mandeville Hospital Trusts**

### **Draft work programme**

#### **Context**

The Local Government Act 2000 required local authorities to establish Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSC). Under the NHS Act, councils with social services responsibilities are to have their scrutiny role extended to include the NHS. The County Council has decided that initially the Partnership OSC, which includes members from the four District Councils in Buckinghamshire, should begin to undertake the necessary preparation for the new role.

There is uncertainty about the exact date that the legislation will come into force although it is assumed that it will probably be in April 2003. In preparation for this, early discussions have already taken place between representatives of the Bucks Health Authority and Bucks County Council. The view was formed that mutual advantage could be gained from an initial pilot scrutiny project of the proposal to merge the South Bucks and Stoke Mandeville Hospital Trusts. This paper sets out the way in which this might be done.

#### **Purpose and objective of the review**

- To examine the reasons for the merger
- To test the merits of the proposals to merge
- To consider whether the stated benefits are likely to be achieved
- To consider any disadvantages that may result
- To add to the effectiveness of the consultation process
- To provide Bucks County Council and the Health Authority with an opportunity to examine the implications of Health Service Scrutiny
- To prepare a report for BHA and BCC with appropriate recommendations

#### **Key issues for the Committee**

- Background to the proposal
- Detail about exactly what is being proposed
- Precise information about what the local NHS sees as being the outcome of the amalgamation if it goes ahead
- What are likely to be the major effects (both pro and con) for in-patients and out-patients on local services as they relate to patients (e.g. will patients in the south of the County be expected to travel to Aylesbury and those in the north to Wycombe?)
- Alternatives to amalgamation
- The consequences of inaction or different action being taken
- Best practice from other areas (e.g. size of hospital Trusts, distances patients travel, concentration of services in specific areas etc)
- An understanding of what patients want and need
- An understanding of how the proposals would affect hospital visiting

- Staff views on the proposal
- The public's views on the proposal
- An understanding of the needs of primary care services in relation to the hospital trusts
- The views of the primary care services
- Knowledge of which other services (e.g. social services) are likely to be affected by the amalgamation and how (if at all)

### **Witnesses who may be invited to speak to the Committee**

- The amalgamation project team
- Medical staff (Consultants, doctors, nurses, unions? etc.)
- GPs
- Non-medical staff (Managers, administrators, clerks, social workers etc.)
- Patients (CHCs, Patients' Association?)
- Other patient organisations (if they exist e.g. Leagues of friends?)
- PCTs (including community based services such as community nurses, psychiatric services etc.)
- Impartial "expert" on health service provision
- Ambulance trusts

### **Methodology**

- Press statement announcing that the Partnership OSC is to consider the proposed merger and inviting comment from the public
- Discussions with those listed above either by inviting them to visit the Committee for presentations and questions by members; or by
- Site visits to meet some of the people on the above list and to see at first hand the services that are likely to be affected
- Discussions with representatives of user groups
- Circulation of the report for comment
- Publication of the report

### **Review Timetable**

The dates depend on the actual schedule for consultation on the merger so the timetable below is a guide only.

February	Identifying the scope of the review in conjunction with BHA Studying proposals and documents
March	Interviews/Visits/Consultation
April	Interviews/Visits/Consultation
Late April	Drafting report
Early May	Publish report