

AGENDA ITEM:

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH HELD ON FRIDAY 14 JUNE 2002 AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL, COMMENCING AT 10.00AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.20PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Appleyard, Mrs P Bacon, Mr M Coulston, Mr C Jones, Julia Wassell, Mrs P Wilkinson, Mr H Wilson

District Councils

Mrs G Smith	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Mrs M Hamilton	Chiltern District Council
Mrs J Kverndal	South Bucks District Council
Mrs L Clarke	Wycombe District Council

Others in attendance

Mrs J Woolveridge	South Bucks District Council
Mrs E Young	Vale of Aylesbury Community Health Council

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr M C Appleyard be elected as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Health for the ensuing year.

MR M C APPLEYARD IN THE CHAIR

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr H Wilson was appointed Vice-Chairman

APOLOGIES

There were none reported

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

None

Mr Appleyard welcomed members to the inaugural meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Health.

Members introduced themselves to the Committee. The Chairman introduced Eileen Young, Chairman of the Aylesbury Vale CHC. He reported that as the CHCs would cease to exist in the next twelve months, it was useful for the committee to have the opportunity to draw on their experience. It was noted that Jenny Hunt also from Aylesbury Vale CHC, together with Ailsa Harrison, Chief Executive of South Bucks CHC would be attending future meetings. The Chairman reminded members that he was Chairman of the South Bucks CHC but felt there was no conflict of interest.

1 BACKGROUND TO HEALTH SCRUTINY

Roger Edwards, Lead Officer Overview and Scrutiny introduced the report and outlined the background to Health Scrutiny. He reminded members of the government's decision to give, from February 2003, Local Authorities the power to undertake overview and scrutiny of Health. He reported that all Local Authorities were setting up committees, in Buckinghamshire the committee had been set up with each of the four District Councils being represented. Legislation due out at the end of 2002 was expected to allow co-opted members to be voting members. Following consultation the Department of Health received 532 written responses from County Councils and the Community Health Councils (CHCs), and over 1100 verbal responses. Draft regulations were due to be published in the Autumn, followed by a second round of consultation, 'listening exercise' where some changes were expected. The final regulations and guidance would be available from December 2002. He suggested that further discussion on the remit of the committee may be necessary once the guidance had been received.

During discussion Mr Edwards sought the committee's advice on the format information would be disseminated amongst members. Members agreed that information and data should be presented in written format and liked the use of data maps.

Training

Discussing training needs it was reported that 'training packs' were available from the Department of Health. Other opportunities included training alongside non-executives of the PCTs and visits to health establishments. The Chief Executive of the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority had given a positive response to training requirements.

A member reminded the committee that the meetings of the PCTs and the Mental Health Trust were open, and suggested that members, as part of training, should attend these. A list of dates would be circulated.

Cllr Lesley Clarke, representative for Wycombe District Council, reported on a seminar facilitated by the School Public Policy Management Centre – 'Under the Microscope, Local Authority Scrutiny of NHS', Cllr Clarke suggested that this may be a forum to meet and discuss other authorities experiences in Health Scrutiny and could be included for training.

It was noted that a package would be put together and circulated to members.

General

The Chairman reported that as the boundaries of health were not conclusive with County boundaries, requests from bordering authorities to sit on the Committee had been received. It was agreed that these requests would be considered and the experiences of other authorities would be sought, proposals would be submitted to the committee at a future meeting. It was noted that the way the committee was constituted was unlikely to change in the new guidelines. Local Authorities had been given some flexibility on the how to go forward. Members expressed their concerns that the size of the committee could become too large and the ethos lost.

2 THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

Members received a package of information relating to Health in Buckinghamshire. The Chairman highlighted the national objectives within the HIMP report that outlined a number of things effecting health in the County - education transport, social care as well as deprivation and housing. He reminded members that one of the key objectives was to look at the strategy, performance and how health in the county was improved and monitored.

Mr Edwards reported that the Government thinking was clear when giving powers to Local Authorities in that they must not undertake the same work as PCTs, Hospital Trusts and other bodies. He reported that the Strategic Health Authority was responsible for performance monitoring of PCTs and Hospital Trusts.

The views of members was sought to develop a work programme. Some ideas put forward included:

- Service provision
- Board merger of Stoke Mandeville and South Bucks NHS Trusts
- Accessibility of services to users
- Future of the Ambulance Service
- Public finance redevelopment issues with Stoke Mandeville Hospital

During discussion members expressed the following views:

- Thematic look at preventative health/measures; the Audit Commission reported that 40% of patients were malnourished.
- Looking at demographic data to examine how it is collected and analysed
- Look at how PCTs are carrying out statutory tasks
- Look at how extra money coming into Health was being spent

In response the officer reported the committee had the authority to call in the Chief Executives of the PCTs to question how statutory obligations were being met. He added that through discussion a number of themes had been identified. However it was important to be up-to-date with information and changes. He continued by explaining that the open minutes of the Trust Boards together with the PCTs HIMP plans, which the committee can examine, and the knowledge brought by the representative from the CHCs were important sources to draw on.

It was noted that the Chief Executive of the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority had suggested a number of issues facing the SHA that he would like a link with the committee.

Further discussion centred on PCTs overlapping into other authorities. It was noted that the committee's remit allowed examination of issues outside the county where they were seen to effect the health and well being of Buckinghamshire residents. A meeting with officers from Berkshire Unitary Authorities, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes was taking place to discuss and share work programmes.

It was agreed that a decision on the work programme would be taken at the next meeting of the Committee.

3 LINKS WITH OTHER PARTS OF HEALTH SCRUTINY

The Committee was asked to begin considering how to develop links with other parts of Health in light of the creation of a number of new organisations concerned with providing advice and support to users of health services.

Following information brought to the committee by Eileen Young (appended to the minutes at 1), it was agreed that more information was required into each of the organisations and how they linked together.

4 THE AMALGAMATION OF THE SOUTH BUCKS AND STOKE MANDEVILLE ACUTE HOSPITAL TRUSTS

It was reported that the Committee may like to look at the decision to amalgamate the two acute hospital trusts and invite the two Chief Executives, the CHCs who conducted the consultations and members of the Strategic Health Authority to discuss the issues and reassure members that the amalgamation was only of management and that it would not effect service provision. The Chairman reported that Ailsa Harrison was listing all services, including size, provided by each hospital. The Committee was asked how they would like to proceed with this issue.

Eileen Young reported that a number of meetings had been arranged as part of the consultation process. She further reported on some concerns Aylesbury Vale CHC had with regard to the delivery of services and the changes taking place in acute hospitals put in by the Colleges, for instance the closure of services without consultation.

Following discussion where a number of members expressed their concerns it was suggested and agreed that the Chairman would write to the Chief Executives of the two trusts establishing clearly in writing the changes occurring. The letter would clearly state that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Health would monitor the situation closely and address the real concerns expressed by members.

DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Friday 26 July 2002 at 10am, Mezzanine Room 3, County Hall, Aylesbury.

Following discussion on future meetings it was agreed that the committee would meet on the last Friday of each month except August at 10.00am and the venue would move around the County.