

# **ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

## **PROGRESS REPORT - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

### **Background**

1. The Access to Healthcare Strategic Partnership Group was established in March 2006. The aims of this partnership included: identifying local priorities and issues relating to access to healthcare services, mainstreaming accessibility and supporting local transport planning through member organisations, regularly developing Access to Healthcare Action Plans, and establishing and overseeing working groups as appropriate.
2. The Strategic Partnership has membership from Buckinghamshire County Council Transportation Service, Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust, Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, and South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust. In addition, a representative of the BCC Policy Support unit (OSC Team) has recently taken up an invitation to attend meetings. To ensure strategic support for the group both the County Council and the Primary Care Trust have Director level members (BCC - Strategic Director: Planning & Transportation).
3. Based on feedback from consultation leading up to the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan (2006/7-2010/11) the steering group agreed the following short to medium-term priorities:
  - Improving access to primary care services and out-of-hours services
  - Increasing the co-ordination of passenger transport resources across sectors
  - Addressing the accessibility impacts of acute care restructuring
  - Addressing the accessibility impacts of mental healthcare restructuring
  - Integrating appointment and travel planning systems
  - Establishing and promoting workplace travel planning
4. The Strategic Partnership has initially focused on mainstreaming consideration related to access issues as part of the planning process. As a consequence of this the following has been established:

- The main strategic plans for reconfiguration of the local health economy will be presented to the Strategic Partnership so that access issues can be identified and debated at the earliest point
  - Access has been included as a criteria for any business cases developed for the provision of new services and key developments around relocation of GP Practices
  - The BCC Transportation Service now has representation on the planning group overseeing the Bucks Hospitals Trust reconfiguration
5. The Partnership has reviewed each of the 6 priority areas. A review of progress on each of the priority workstrands is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Areas for Development and Proposals**

6. The first year of the Strategic Partnership has successfully mainstreamed accessibility issues, generated effective networks between health and transport and initiated pilot and exploratory work on a number of the key priority areas. There are two areas for development that the partnership must now progress:
- Identifying and quantifying specific access needs
  - Developing systems for access issues to be reported to the strategic partnership
7. In response to the areas identified for development the partnership is pursuing the following:
- The next meeting of the group will be dedicated to analysing current awareness of transport issues and demand. This will include input from the Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS) to capture issues patients are directly reporting
  - Strengthening the mechanisms for feedback on health related transport issues from local transport consultations, Getting Closer to Communities work and PALS

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# **APPENDIX 1**

## **Progress Report - Individual work strands 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

### **Improving access to primary care services and out-of-hours services**

- PCT is currently reviewing strategic planning process and framework and developing new strategic plan
- Transportation has called for accessibility impact assessment process to be integrated into all strategic plans and ad hoc locational decision-making
- Have attempted and will continue to try involve GP practices and patient forums in our Community Accessibility Planning Partnership process in all areas across Bucks

### **Increasing the co-ordination of passenger transport resources**

- Exploratory talks have been held between Transportation and Ambulance Trust; some investigation of practice elsewhere in UK
- Three major problem areas requiring further work have been identified: (i) use of (different) computer control systems, (ii) assessment of NHS requirements and compatibility of available supply; (iii) funding, eligibility and contractual agreements
- Further progress is currently impeded by internal bid and Transformation projects, and will be so for at least next three months

### **Addressing the accessibility impacts of acute care restructuring**

- Decision taken to invite Transportation representative to Shaping Health Services Board to consider further transport and accessibility issues relating to restructuring

### **Addressing the accessibility impacts of mental healthcare restructuring**

- As part of the 'Putting People First' restructuring Oxon & Bucks Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust recently announced the closure of the adult inpatient ward closes at Amersham's Haleacre unit and transfer to Aylesbury's Tindal Centre.
- The County Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Health has told OBMH to draw up plans to help families make the longer journeys. (Buckinghamshire Free Press, 10 Jun 2007; [Longer journeys for mental health patients](#))
- OBMH's chief operating officer, has said: "The Trust remains committed to talking to individual patients who have been moved from Frith Ward and their families and carers regarding transport. If families and carers need support with transport they should contact the ward manager." (Buckinghamshire Free Press, 15 Jun 2007; [Mum slams ward closure](#))
- The Transportation Service has not yet been involved in consultation or joint-working regarding the implementation of the 'Putting People First' programme.

### **Integrating appointment-travel planning**

- It was decided to undertake a pilot project to identify an effective process for integrating appointments and travel planning – the new retinopathy diabetic screening service was selected as the pilot.
- The project partners are the County Retinopathy unit and BCC Travel Planning Team
- 21,000 patients in Bucks
- 30% historical non-attendance at appointments under previous arrangements
- 4 centres to be used – Stoke Mandeville, Wycombe, Amersham, Milton Keynes Gen. Hospitals
- The approach agreed consists of the booking centre staff arranging appointments to coincide with available public transport services and sending out travel planning cards with appointment letters; the Transportation Service's role consisted of producing the travel planning cards, and responding to individual requests for personal travel plans; patients have responsibility for obtaining public transport information (online, via telephone, or by post) and arranging their own journeys.
- At the moment the booking centre has had to drop plans to identify public transport availability when booking appointments as there have been serious problems with the software programme for bookings.

- The project partners will also need to develop a full project plan and establish a process for monitoring and evaluating the scheme. They also need to discuss the possibility of including Dial-a-Ride and other community transport services in the scheme.
- In addition to the above, the Transportation Service has created a specific webpage and maps giving information about public transport access to local hospitals on the BCC public website

### **Workplace travel planning**

- Bucks Mental Health Trust has produced a Workplace travel plan for consultation with staff
- Bucks Hospital Trust is in the process of developing a WTP
- The Transportation Service:
  - is in regular communication with NHS organisations and has offered its support as necessary
  - has begun helping the Hospital Trust analyse staff travel patterns by mapping employees home addresses
  - is trying to promote workplace travel planning in the NHS by holding two national workplace travel planning conferences in 2006/7 with invitations to all PCTs across England.