

Information/Discussion Paper

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 October 2005

Update on the work of Gloucestershire NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 At the Social and Community Committee meeting on 21 February 2005, I provided a briefing on the work of Gloucestershire's NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is an update on that work, and as CBC's representative on the Committee, I would again welcome Councillors' comments to feed back.

2. Recent issues

- 2.1 These are the major pieces of work currently being undertaken by the Committee:
- **Scrutiny Inquiry into Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Ambulance Service Review:** The Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has argued that the proposed merger was operational rather than strategic, and that therefore a full consultation was not necessary. The sub group was not convinced by this and therefore it was decided that the OSC would hold a public inquiry meeting at which members of the public as well as committee members could question the SHA and the Ambulance Trusts. At a meeting on 14 September a number of witnesses were called to answer questions regarding the SHA's consultation document '*How patients can benefit from a single, new Ambulance Trust*', the SHA's impact assessment on the merger, and the Department of Health's national review of Ambulance Services '*Taking Healthcare to the Patient*'. Following this Inquiry, the Committee will produce a report to the SHA.
 - **Drug Misuse Aftercare Project:** This is the largest project yet to be undertaken by the Committee. A project group has been set up, of which I am a member. The project brief is to analyse existing aftercare services for problematic drug users or former drug users leaving prison or residential rehabilitation. We will work with drug users, people on rehabilitation and many different service providers. We will identify good practice across Britain and Europe; identify barriers that prevent people from maintaining gains made in treatment, and consider how these barriers could be

overcome. We hope to make a number of recommendations on how to improve aftercare for serious drug users. This project has been awarded £20,000 from the Centre for Public Scrutiny to help ensure that an excellent piece of work is completed, and we hope it will be an invaluable exercise both in terms of the recommendations reached and the lessons learnt for how scrutiny can work effectively.

- **Older People's Mental Health Services Review:** A formal consultation begun on 3 October 2005 on changes to the service provision. West Gloucestershire PCT is the PCT responsible for this area, and is planning a large number of one-to-one or small group discussions, as it was felt large public meetings might not be the best forum to gain the views of the users of these services. The Committee has a sub group which has commented on the draft consultation document and will participate fully in the consultation.
- **Implementation of Children's Services Review:** Gloucestershire PCTs decided to retain Battledown Ward as a nurse-led unit. This group is monitoring the implementation of that decision and other matters relating to Children's Services.

2.4 In addition, the Committee has been briefed on and discussed a number of issues:

- NHS Reconfiguration – the SHA's options for the reorganisation of health services across Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. This will be the subject of much ongoing scrutiny by the committee
- The Report of the Director of Public Health on key public health issues in Gloucestershire
- The progress of the new Out of Hours services
- Cotswold and Vale PCT's plans for community hospitals
- Gloucestershire's Dental Action Plan
- Tetbury Hospital Consultation

3. Future Agenda Items

3.1 Childhood obesity

- It is likely that this will be the next major area of work. The Committee has requested some initial research relating to the link between deprivation and childhood obesity, and it is expected that a project will review what is being done or could be done to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity in Gloucestershire's most deprived areas.

3.2 Further items

- Other topics are under consideration for a major review, but it was decided to wait until the conclusion of the Inquiry into the Ambulance Services Review before making any decision. The NHS Reconfiguration will also form a major part of the work plan.

The next meeting of the Committee is on 7 November 2005, and if any members have any issues they would like to be considered for the work plan, I can ask for them to be considered at that meeting.

- **Conclusion**

This is just a brief summary of the work and I will happily answer any questions, and provide any further information, as well as feeding back any comments members may have on various issues.

Background Papers

The reports referred to are available on the County Council's website, or by emailing Richard.thorn@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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