

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

2 NOVEMBER 2006

**REPORT OF HEALTH SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

Adult Services and Health – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs Cains

REVIEW OF NHS DENTISTRY PROVISION IN STOCKTON BOROUGH

1. Summary

This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the review of NHS Dentistry in Stockton Borough undertaken by the Health Select Committee between April and October 2006.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the North Tees Primary Care Trust:

Target areas and patient groups with an identified need are priority groups requiring access to the mobile dental facility purchased by the PCT. Particular consideration should be given to areas of high density of elderly people especially where NHS provision has been removed or locations of nursing care homes.

When appropriate, participate in initiatives that introduce or increase children's access to fluoride.

It is recommended that the North East Strategic Health Authority:

Undertake consultation in Stockton Borough to determine the level of local support for the introduction of fluoridation to the borough's water supply.

It is recommended to Cabinet that:

Before the academic year 2007-08 Stockton-on-Tees Children's Trust, with North Tees PCT maximise the uptake of school dental screening and dental surveys by incorporating dental consent within the health consent forms used at the beginning of childrens' school careers.

Assistance is given to North Tees PCT to publicise issues about NHS dentistry through Council publications, in particular Stockton News which is delivered to every house in the borough.

Council officers with links to the many and various community and voluntary groups provide the Head of Primary Care, North Tees PCT with contact information to target those groups in order to publicise dentistry issues.

The Community Lynx 'demand responsive' bus service advertises access to dental practices as part of its health care remit.

The Integrated Transport Environmental Policy Unit provide the Committee with an accessibility map to identify available bus transport to dental practices in the borough.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

This topic was identified as an area meriting a scrutiny review at a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum held on 8 March 2006. The issue was subsequently referred to the Health Select Committee for approval, and passed to a meeting of the Executive Scrutiny Committee as part of the work programming procedure.

The objectives/aims developed by the Committee for the review were as follows: -

- To explore if alternative ways can be found to provide affordable dentistry in the Borough
- To examine the changes to NHS dentistry introduced from 1 April 2006 and explore dental provision elsewhere

The review addresses the following strategic corporate objectives:

- Improve the public health of the Borough

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare

any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.

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DETAIL

1. The review was instigated owing to concerns that, without, NHS dentists, patients would have to opt for private provision, travel outside of the Borough for NHS treatment or choose not to have treatment which might result in a reduction of preventative care. In January 2006, North Tees PCT had confirmed that there were no dentists offering NHS treatment for new adult patients in the Stockton area. The Committee took evidence from a wide variety of witnesses including the PCT, dentists and patient and public representatives.
2. The Committee hoped at the beginning of this review to have been able to help find a resolution to the problem that residents have in accessing an NHS dentist locally. Unfortunately this has not been possible and the problem remains in place even though all interested parties are working hard to find alternative solutions.
3. A major concern was that the new contract arrangements impact on the level of preventative care that is available. As a result consideration was given to the issue of fluoridation of Stockton's water supply. Evidence provided pointed towards its oral health benefits but this would need to be considered in light of residents' views.
4. The Committee is pleased to have had an opportunity to speak to patient and public representatives and following the exchange of views regards the need for elderly people is as important in the planning of dental services as that available for younger residents.
5. Recognising the effort that officers in the PCT are giving, the Committee hopes that it and Council officers can give support in helping disseminate information and publicity for the PCT as it continues to overcome the issues highlighted in this review.

CONSULTATION, INCLUDING WARD COUNCILLORS

6. As part of the review process, the Committee sought views from the PCT, dentists and patient and public representatives.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. None

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

8. The review supports the Healthier Communities and Adults theme.

Contact Officer: Graham Birtle, Scrutiny Officer

Telephone No. 01642 526187

E-mail Address: graham.birtle@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

N/a

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

N/a