

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting10th June 2010

1. Title of Item/Report

Establishment of Regional Health Scrutiny Committee

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered a report relating to the Establishment of a Regional Health Scrutiny Committee.

It was explained that the Health Select Committee had, in the past, taken advantage of the free support days provided by the Centre for Public Scrutiny to deliver Member training on Health Scrutiny. The most recent programme of support from the Centre consisted of 10 free days to Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) in each Strategic Health Authority area. An application to use this support was made last year on behalf of the region and was successful.

As a result of the bid, an expert advisor was appointed to the 12 North East Councils. It was agreed that this support would be used to develop health scrutiny structures on a regional basis. On 28 February a joint meeting of health scrutiny chairs from across the region was held to discuss a draft protocol and possible working arrangements and a consensus was reached that there should be a standing regional health scrutiny committee to scrutinise regional health issues (for example the work of the Strategic Health Authority) and respond to statutory health consultations affecting all North East Councils.

An example of a statutory health consultation affecting the full region was the recent North East Ambulance Service consultation on their application to become a Foundation Trust (this took place during summer 2009). In that case a committee had to be formed at short notice in order to be able to respond to the consultation. Having a standing committee in place would ensure that if and when similar regional issues arose, they could be expedited in a quick and efficient way. Cabinet was informed that it was planned that the Committee would meet twice a year, and so this would not place an unreasonable burden on host authorities. The Committee may also choose to undertake discretionary scrutiny reviews on issues that affect the region as a whole.

A protocol had been drafted regarding a new standing regional scrutiny committee and this was provided for consideration. Members were asked to endorse the protocol to Council, and to endorse the proposal that the Chair of the Health Select Committee be the Council's representative. It was also recommended that if the Chair of the Health Select Committee was unavailable to attend a Regional Committee meeting then the Vice Chair of the Health Select Committee should attend as substitute. If neither the Chair or vice Chair was available then a substitute should be identified from the remaining members serving on the Council's Health Select Committee.

To enable the Protocol to be finalised and signed up to on behalf of the Council without the need for further reports, Cabinet was asked to recommend to Council that the Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to agree and sign up to the final version of the Protocol, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Corporate Management and Finance, and Adult Services and Health, and with the Chair of the Health Select Committee.

In order to ensure that all relevant Council Members and Officers were able to have appropriate input to the work of the Joint Committee, it was proposed that the following were discussed in advance with the Chair and/or Vice Chair/identified substitute member of the Health Select Committee; the relevant Cabinet Member (s); the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care, or their nominees:

- proposed scrutiny topics or work;
- agenda items/business;
- urgent action in between Joint Committee meetings;
- review reports (draft and final);
- proposed media communications.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

1. the Regional Health Scrutiny Committee Protocol be endorsed.
2. the Chair of the Health Select Committee be appointed to serve on the proposed Joint Committee.
3. the Vice-Chair of the Health Select Committee be approved as the initial substitute Member for the Chair of the Health Select Committee on the joint body.
4. in the event of the Chair and Vice Chair being unable to attend a

meeting of the Regional Health Scrutiny Committee, then a substitute be identified from the remaining Members of the Council's Health Select Committee..

5. the Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to finalise and sign up to the Protocol on behalf of the Council, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Corporate Management and Finance, and Adult Services and Health, and with the Chair of the Health Select Committee.

6. the proposed internal governance arrangements outlined above be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Approval of the protocol and nominations by Council would enable Stockton Council to participate in the newly established regional health scrutiny committee. The Committee would strengthen existing arrangements by building on the work of individual Council committees and by creating a forum to consider matters appropriate to that level. The authority delegated to the Director of Law and Democracy in consultation with named Members will enable the protocol to be finalised and signed up to on behalf of the Council without the requirement for further reports.

The proposed internal governance arrangements regarding the Joint Committee's proposed scrutiny work and the communications about that work will ensure that all relevant Members and Officers are able to have appropriate input on an informed basis.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not applicable

Proper Officer
14 June 2010