

## **Adult Services & Health Select Committee**

A meeting of Adult Services & Health Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 7th November, 2007.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs Ann Cains (Chairman); Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr John Gardner.

**Officers:** Ms R.Hill (CESC); G.Birtle, N.Hart (LD).

**Also in attendance:** N.Nicholson (Dir. of Finance-North Tees PCT); P.Frank (Head of Patient Experience-Tees PCT's); P.Smith, N.Garbutt, A.Lench (LINKs).

**Apologies:** Submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Apedaile, Cockerill, Mrs Craggs, Dixon, Javed and Mrs Nesbitt.

### **ASH 35/07 Minutes - 1st October, 2007**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st October 2007 were agreed as a correct record for consideration by Council; subject to correction of the reference to now read 'LINKs'.

### **ASH 36/07 Review of Alcohol Services**

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Neil Nicholson, Director of Finance-PCT, providing details of the North Tees PCT Finance and Commissioning Plan for 2007/8-2009/10; which confirmed the needs analysis for services for alcohol abuse. It was noted that £2.6M is available for expenditure on Public Health and Health Inequalities; and that any underspend on this area would automatically be carried forward into next year.

In addition to the significant amount of resources available year on year, evaluation was carried out on short term funding projects such as NRF, in order to assess whether there was a continuing need to provide funding via the PCT.

Despite this availability of funding, members expressed concern that people visiting their GP Practice are not sufficiently informed as to what services there are available; and how they can access them. Whilst the treatment of drug related problems receives targeted funding, PCT monies were not similarly targeted towards alcohol services despite it being recognised by the Director of Public Health that alcohol abuse is one of the biggest health problems facing the region. The Director of Finance advised that he welcomed fully costed proposals aimed at addressing alcohol problems as resources were available for this service. It was noted that in addition to monies being provided, a proper infrastructure for commissioning was needed to ensure the appropriateness of the commissioned services.

Reference was again made by the Committee to the need for Accident & Emergency staff to carry out alcohol testing as part of their secondary care service, in order that data can be available to illustrate the extent of alcohol related problems. Additional funding is provided by the PCT to facilitate this recording practice.

CONCLUDED that the content of the presentation be noted.

**ASH  
37/07**

## **PCT Planning / Development Proposals**

Consideration was given to a presentation by Mr Paul Frank, Head of Patient Experience-PCT, regarding development proposals aligned to reconfiguration of the Patient Experience Service.

The aim was to provide a more patient centred approach to the service and a specific proposal was submitted which aimed to convert 4 existing GP Practices in various parts of the Borough into one new co-located Practice situated at Clarence Street, Stockton. The existing premises of the GP Practices were converted dwellings, which did not lend themselves to future expansion and development. Planning applications for the development were expected later this month and a formal 13 week consultation period on the proposal was to begin on 19th November 2007. It was noted that each GP Practice would continue to operate independently .

It would be essential for the development to adhere to the Pathways to Health Initiative criteria; and it was suggested that the PCT would benefit from taking on board the views of the LSP Partnership and the St. Ann's Development as part of their consultation.

CONCLUDED that the content of the presentation be noted.

**ASH  
38/07**

## **Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)**

The Committee was advised of the background to the development of a Local Involvement Network (LINKs) in Stockton Borough; which followed the introduction of Government policy suggesting that Health and Social Care services would benefit from being more responsive to local people.

Following Royal Assent of the Local Government Public Involvement in Public Health Bill, the Dept. of Health were expected to consult in the next few weeks on the powers of LINKs with a view to them being operational from April 2008. Each local authority with a social care remit, are required to procure and appoint an organisation to support the work of the LINK initiative.

The role of the LINK is to influence future service planning, promote commissioning of services and facilitate the scrutiny of local health and social care services. They can also enter and view care facilities provided; seek responses to queries within specified timescales; and refer matters for investigation to the Health Scrutiny Committee. Each local authority was also required to provide a Lead Person to oversee the implementation of these arrangements; and Peter Smith (CESC) had been appointed by this authority. Funding for the implementation and operation of the service will be provided by the Dept. of Health; which would facilitate all associated management costs, support functions and expenditure costs of the organisation delivering the service.

Joint procurement work amongst the Tees Valley had identified Middlesbrough BC with responsibility for procuring a host organisation to understand all of the related local issues across the Tees Valley and to set up a LINK specifically for each of the Boroughs for an initial 3 year period with funding from the Department of Health. The host organisation would be responsible for setting up

the LINK; determining its activities, finance and communication systems; developing its strategic partnerships; promoting its priorities and developing local networks, within an agreed performance framework. The Centre for Public Scrutiny would provide 3 days of support to the LINK to assist its establishment.

Members were advised of the extent of preparatory work already carried out; together with the next stages of development which included awareness events; the establishment of a development plan; the involvement of stakeholders; the procurement of a host organisation; leading to the agreement of a local contract specification by 1st April 2008. Regional and local events were planned for early December to begin the awareness raising; to which members of this Committee were invited to attend.

Members made reference to the great opportunity that was presented but expressed concern that a 'one size fits all' solution could not always be replicated across the region; and that already established strong links with communities, such as the Local Strategic Partnership, should be built upon. It was noted that Middlesbrough intended to advertise for pre-tender interest for the contract for host organisation on the 13th November. Therefore, it was hoped that following the regional and local awareness raising events, opportunity would be allowed for this Select Committee to comment further on what would be included within any contract specification.

CONCLUDED that the content of the presentation be noted and the opportunity be presented for this Committee to comment further on the proposals following the awareness raising events in early December 2007.

**ASH  
39/07**      **Work Programme**

Members requested that a matrix of the evidence gathered during its review of alcohol services be drawn up

CONCLUDED that the update on the Work Programme be noted.

**ASH  
40/07**      **Chairman's Update**

It was noted that Councillor Beall would continue to represent the Committee on the LINK Steering Group; and would advise the Committee accordingly.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.