

**AGENDA ITEM**

**19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2008**

**North Tees Health Centre Development - Consultation: 5<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008**

Summary

The attached paper (see Appendix 1) is the North Tees Primary Care Trust's recently published consultation document which contains proposals for a Stockton Health Centre development. The consultation process began on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> May and continues until Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> August.

Recommendation

That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Health Select Committee considers the content of the attached consultation document as part of discussions with Stephen Groves, University Hospital North Tees Accident & Emergency and Carl Parker, Chair of the PCT Professional Executive Committee.

Detail

1. North Tees Primary Care Trust has begun to consult with all interested persons about the development of a health centre in Stockton and its likely location.
2. This follows the Department of Health publication *Our NHS, our future* in October 2007. The NHS Next Stage Review led by Professor Lord Darzi includes in its interim report the immediate step of providing "...newly procured health centres in easily accessible locations...offering all members of the local population a range of convenient services, even if they choose not to be directly registered with GPs in these centres".
3. The report goes on to state that "...We should invest new resources to enable PCTs to develop 150 GP-led health centres, situated in easily accessible locations and offering a range of services to all members of the local population (whether or not they choose to be registered with these centres), including pre-bookable appointments, walk-in services and other services. The guiding principle will be to ensure that any member of the public can access GP services at any time between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week. These centres will reflect local need and circumstance and maximise the scope for co-location with other community-based services such as diagnostic, therapeutic (eg physiotherapy), pharmacy and social care services. PCTs will be expected to commission these new health centres on a level playing field from existing GP groups or other providers".
4. The British Medical Association, the doctors' professional organisation established to look after the professional and personal needs of members, in its reply to Lord Darzi on GP access and the interim report of the Next Stages Review on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 stated that "...A one-size-fits-all approach for the development of health centres will not work and we believe that the proposals in the interim report are therefore too prescriptive. We would hope that PCTs will be able to apply some flexibility to their planning around the services to be

provided in the new health centres, which would be in line with the Department's commitment through the interim report to supporting 'local change from the centre rather than instructing it...'. The guiding principle that the new health centres will provide routine GP services from 8.00am-8.00pm, seven days a week, is an example of this overly prescriptive approach. The English Department of Health's GP Patient Survey showed 84 in every 100 patients to be satisfied with the current opening hours in their practice. Only four out of every hundred patients wanted practices to open on a weekday evening and seven out of every hundred on weekends. Given that only a relatively small minority of patients actually want to see an extension of 'routine' GP care, the GPC believes that this proposal would be an irresponsible use of scarce resources. Although this might be attractive to a very small section of the population, it is likely that if funding for this were to be taken from cancer care for example, and patients were made aware of this, they would feel very differently about such proposals. The committee is opposed to policies that are designed to meet the demands of the articulate at the expense of those in real, clinical need. We remain very concerned that these practices may end up delivering a potentially second-class service to areas of the country that already have significant health inequalities. We believe that, in general, General Medical Service and Personal Medical Service practices offer the best option for all patients, not just those in better-off areas of towns and cities. We are not persuaded that the divide between rich and poor will reduce as a result of these proposals".

5. The King's Fund, an independent charitable foundation working for better health, responded to the Department of Health's interim report saying that "...[it] should be broadly welcomed although, as Lord Darzi himself acknowledges, this is only the halfway point. It is absolutely right that the government recognises the importance of engaging with clinical staff and listening to patients so that they can deliver a world-class NHS focused on the needs of patients rather than of institutions. To create a health system that truly puts patients first, local services need to be responsive to local people and accountable for the outcomes they produce. The future of the NHS doesn't lie in centrally devised grand plans, but in practical and effective changes around the country at a local level".
6. The comments to the Department of Health's interim report are provided to assist the members of the Health Select Committee by informing of other professional views regarding the modernisation of the NHS in general and the development of health centres in particular.

### Conclusion

The Health Select Committee is asked to consider the content of the consultation document and to reflect on the discussion with health professionals as part of its scrutiny of the PCT proposals.

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Background Papers :

Stockton Health Centre Development Proposals: Consultation Document (see Appendix 1)

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Hardwick Ward – Councillors Noble and Mrs Nesbitt