

8 March 2011

Health Select Committee Review of Work 2007-11

Summary

Members are asked to consider the information outlining the work of the Select Committee during the period of 2007-11.

Detail

1. The Committee has undertaken a wide variety of work over the period of the current Council. This has included in-depth scrutiny reviews, Committee-led EIT reviews, responses to NHS consultations, and a number of other pieces of work in order to undertake its overview role.
2. As the meeting of 8 March is scheduled to be the final meeting of the current Committee, this report has been compiled in order to summarise this work. Similar reports are being provided at the final meetings of the other Select Committees.

In-depth Scrutiny Reviews

3. During the municipal years 2007-8, and 2008-9, the Committee undertook scrutiny reviews of alcohol services, and local audiology provision.

Review of Alcohol Services

Scope and findings

4. The Committee was made aware of growing concerns in relation to alcohol abuse through the annual reports of the Director of Public Health. 'Binge drinking' was seen as a particular problem in the region, and the Committee were also aware of perceived gaps in local service provision.
5. The Committee recommended that a gap analysis be undertaken to assess services against need, and it was found that there was a need to update the information held locally on the scope of the alcohol problem. The Committee also found that finance to tackle the issue was not ring-fenced, and that there was a need to strengthen partnership working and awareness in relation to alcohol problems.
6. **The following key outcomes have been achieved:**

- A needs assessment was undertaken and formed the basis of a new Alcohol Strategy for the Borough in partnership with the PCT, with a multi-agency group set up to take this work forwards and a joint post of lead officer was appointed to lead on the work;
- Care pathways were improved and disseminated amongst staff;
- The Drug Action Team widened to include the consideration of alcohol issues;
- Alcohol referral for arrested individuals has been introduced and funding will be reviewed on a yearly basis;
- Two-year fixed term post was provided at North Tees and Hartlepool FT for a specialist alcohol nurse;
- Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, has been established with financial support from NHS Stockton-on-Tees;
- A range of consultation and awareness raising activity has taken place.

Review of Audiology

Scope and findings

7. The review was proposed in order to enable the Select Committee to review progress in reducing waiting times for audiology services and identify improvements to audiology services for residents of Stockton Borough.
8. The Committee were pleased to hear about the significant reduction in waiting times for audiology services and wished to congratulate the PCT on putting in place effective measures to achieve the reduction. The Committee were supportive of any future plans for the provision of more localised services in community settings. The benefits of utilising a private provider to create additional capacity were recognised especially where the provider had the added benefit of a High Street presence.
9. The Committee noted the different care pathways for children's screening between Hartlepool and Stockton and felt that the respective merits of each model should be investigated by the PCT to inform decisions about future provision.
10. **The following key outcomes have been achieved:**
 - Work continues to develop town centre based clinics as part of the Momentum programme;
 - Audio-visual-tactile equipment is in place at North Tees and James Cook Hospitals' audiology clinics;
 - GP awareness has been raised in relation to the ear wax pathway in order to prevent audiology clinic appointments being delayed;
 - Demand at the North Tees clinic has been reviewed;

- A roll out of high street audiology providers has been achieved, building on the Specsavers pilot.

Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Programme

11. Members will be aware that the majority of the work programme for 2009-10, and 2010-11, has been concerned with undertaking EIT reviews.

EIT Review of Fair Access to Care Services

Scope and findings

12. The review focussed on the level of eligibility criteria operated by the Council in relation to adult social care. Prior to the review, Stockton Council provided care and equipment for those assessed as having needs in the Moderate, Substantial and Critical bands, and equipment only for those people assessed as being in the Low band.
13. The review found that Stockton Council has increasing pressures on its adult care budget, and that demand was projected to increase over the next few years. Stockton was increasingly unusual in terms of the number of authorities who provided care at three levels of the FACS criteria; the majority had restricted care to the top two bands (72% as of 2007-8).
14. By raising the criteria it was recognised that this would enable the Council to focus on those in the most need. The need for an investment in preventative, community services was recognised in order to mitigate the impact of the amended criteria and to help ensure that people did not need to receive care in the first place, wherever possible.
15. **The key outcomes for the review include:**
 - FACS criteria to be raised to Substantial and Critical only for all services (including equipment) on 1 April 2011;
 - A communications plan will be developed ahead of this, and additional staff resources will be considered in order to undertake the re-assessment process;
 - Investment in preventative services will be considered, with particular reference being given to assistive technology;
 - In recognition of many of the community based services that already exist, greater and more effective promotion of these services will take place in order to signpost people towards them;
 - Many of these services are based in the voluntary and community sector, and consideration will be given to providing support to such services through established corporate schemes;
 - Work would continue to take place in order to maintain the integrity of the Council's adult social care data as this had been identified as an issue during the review;
 - It is too early to provide a firm picture of savings generated but this could be in the region of £500k, assuming a saving in care packages

of c. £1m (based on current clients as of Autumn 2010), and some re-investment of this money within community and preventative services.

EIT Task and Finish Review of Adult Service Structures

16. The Committee has been considering the officer-led review of the structure of the adult services. The options report will be considered by the Committee at the meeting of 8 March.

NHS Consultations

17. The NHS has a duty to consult the Committee on any service re-configurations that are felt to be substantial, alongside its general duties to involve the patients and public in the planning of local health services. The major consultation that the Committee has considered during this period was on the Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare project.
18. In order to consider the proposals for a new hospital north of the Tees and associated improvements to community and primary healthcare services, the Committee formed a Joint Committee with the other affected local authorities (Hartlepool, Durham, North Yorkshire). The consultation took place during the summer of 2008, and the Joint Committee reported to the NHS Joint Committee set up to decide on the proposals. The proposals were supported in principle, and the Joint Scrutiny Committee also supported the option to locate the hospital at Wynyard Business Park.
19. Following agreement of the proposals, work on the community and town centre based facilities, and improved care pathways, continues to be taken forward. North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust are now proposing a revised Outline Business Case for the hospital element of the project in order to take this forward. The Select Committee have continued to receive updates on these proposals.
20. The Committee have also been consulted on a range of other proposals for changes to local health services. These include the development of a GP-led Walk In Centre at Hardwick, the proposal to develop the Billingham Headway centre for the re-location of 3 GP practices, the re-development of the Yarm Medical Practice buildings, and the consolidation of three GP practices onto a new site at Clarence Street, Stockton.
21. The Committee have also been kept aware of proposals that affect specialised services at a national and regional level. These include the proposals to enhance the provision of northern region specialised burn care, the national review of child heart surgery, and the national review of children's neurosurgery.
22. During the summer of 2010, Members of the Committee worked on a response to the NHS White Paper, in particular its proposals for democratic

accountability, and this response was aligned to the response co-ordinated by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

Other work

23. The Committee has continued to monitor the impact of reviews that took place prior to 2007-11, and this mainly related to the review of NHS Dentistry provision in the Borough. The Committee have noted that improvements have taken place to the accessibility and awareness of NHS dentists, including use of a mobile unit and establishment of additional practices, and future work may now take place to investigate the feasibility of fluoridating water in areas of the North East.
24. During the 2007-11 period, the Committee also considered a Cabinet referral on the issue of services provided at the Parkview Care Home. Following the closure of the facility, a project is now being taken forward in order to develop an extra-care scheme on the same site.
25. Following the formation of Stockton-on-Tees Local Involvement Network (LINK), the Committee have established close working relationships with the LINK. The Chair of the LINK regularly attends Committee meetings, and both the Committee and the LINK have worked together in order to provide a joint statement in the published version of the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT Quality Account.
26. The LINK has also provided input to other pieces of work led by the Committee, for example, the consultation that took place as part of the EIT review of Fair Access to Care Services during 2010.
27. Annual Healthchecks have now been discontinued. However, during their existence, these gave the Committee an annual opportunity to comment on the information provided by local health trusts' that was set against a number of standards as outlined by the Healthcare Commission.
28. The Committee has itself sought and received information on a number of other issues as part of its overview role. These have included updates on the progress of the Transforming Community Services proposals (transfer of PCT community services to alternative providers), the PCT Strategy, and information on local medicines management, for example. The Committee has also attended a variety of local and regional engagement events to examine new ways of working (eg. Personal Budgets), and has held informal sessions locally in order to raise awareness of particular issues, for example End of Life Care, and the work of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).
29. Members of the Committee have also contributed to the work of a number of regional committees and projects.

30. The Tees Valley Health Joint Scrutiny Committee is a discretionary joint committee set up to consider issues that affect the Tees Valley as a whole. The Committee has considered a range of service change proposals on behalf of the wider area (including Tees-wide GP Out of Hours services, and Sexual Health services), and has conducted a number of pro-active pieces of work, including a recent review of cancer screening in the sub-region, which produced a well received final report. The TV Joint Committee has also had extensive involvement with the North East Ambulance Service, especially in relation to the re-location of local call handling to a new site on Tyneside.
31. Members of the Committee have attended a regional joint health scrutiny committee. Initially this was on an ad hoc basis in order to respond to the North East Ambulance Service's consultation on becoming a Foundation Trust, but this has now become formalised into a standing committee arrangement with the agreement of a joint protocol following a project in spring 2010.
32. The Regional Health Scrutiny Committee has recently overseen the final stages of an innovative regional project to investigate the health needs of the ex-service community. Members of the Select Committee have been heavily involved with both the Project Board/Joint Committee that has overseen the project, and the workstream that investigated the social and economic issues affecting the community. A final report has now been published and has received widespread publicity and support. The report was endorsed by Stockton's Cabinet on 17 February and will now be considered with partners from across the region in order to take the recommendations forward.

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