

TEES VALLEY HEALTH SCRUTINY JOINT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee was held on 12 September 2011.

PRESENT:

Representing Middlesbrough Council:
Councillors Dryden and Mrs H Pearson

Representing Redcar & Cleveland Council:
Councillors Carling and Mrs Wall

Representing Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council:
Councillor E Cunningham (as substitute for Councillor N Wilburn),
Councillors Javed and Mrs M Womphrey.

OFFICERS: J Walsh (Hartlepool Borough Council), J Bennington and J Ord (Middlesbrough Council), M Ahmeen (Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council) and J Trainer (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council).

APPOINTMENT – CHAIR – TEES VALLEY HEALTH SCRUTINY JOINT COMMITTEE

In a report of the Scrutiny Support Officer Members were advised that the Chairmanship of the Joint Committee had rotated amongst the five Member authorities on a yearly basis and in respect of the 2011/2012 Municipal Year it was due to be Hartlepool Borough Council.

Members were advised that on 18 July 2011 the Joint Committee's Scrutiny secretariat received notification from Hartlepool Borough Council's Health Scrutiny Forum confirming that whilst they wanted to remain members of the Joint Committee they wished to decline the position of Chair for the Municipal Year 2011/2012.

Following subsequent discussions between the Tees Valley authorities it had been agreed that a Chair be sought from Middlesbrough Council in respect of 2011/2012 and that Officers from Middlesbrough Council would provide support to the Joint Committee for this year.

AGREED as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That Councillor Dryden (Middlesbrough Council) be appointed as Chair of the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/2012.

N.B. Councillor Dryden took the Chair at this point of the meeting.

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Newall and J Taylor (Darlington Borough Council), Councillors S Akers-Belcher and Griffin (Hartlepool Borough Council), Councillor Cole (Middlesbrough Council), Councillor Kay (Redcar and Cleveland Council) and Councillor N Wilburn (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Item / Nature of Interest
Councillor Mrs Wall	Personal/Non-Prejudicial	Any matters arising relating to North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust - related to a number of employees.

TEES VALLEY HEALTH SCRUTINY JOINT COMMITTEE – SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/2012

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted an introductory report on potential sources for scrutiny topics and information reports for the Joint Committee's 2011/2012 work programme.

It was acknowledged that an element of such a programme would be reactive to emerging issues from local NHS organisations especially taking into consideration the significant changes in the NHS.

The Joint Committee considered possible topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme. One suggested area related to the implementation of Government health reforms in particular how services that were previously planned and commissioned on a Tees wide level would continue on such a basis following the major changes. Reference was made to such services as Cancer Screening Services, Sexual Health Services, and Major Trauma Services and Cancer Services at James Cook University Hospital.

Reference was also made to ongoing activities to formulate Clinical Commissioning Groups and Health and Wellbeing Boards which were coterminous with local authority boundaries. The Joint Committee discussed the importance of how such groups related to each other with particular regard to joint commissioning arrangements across the Tees Valley and from a wider perspective across the North East.

Members were advised that towards the end of the 2010/2011 winter period the Joint Committee had considered how the local health and social care economy had dealt with the pressures associated with seasonal flu, impact on hospital admissions and how the provision of vaccines had been managed. At that time the Joint Committee had suggested examining such areas prior to the 2011/2012 winter period.

An indication was given of issues which had been raised at that time such as an initial slow take-up of the flu vaccinations and the timing of Government public health advertising campaigns to raise awareness of seasonal flu vaccines. Specific reference had been made to arrangements put in place during the period when there had been a significant increase in flu related complications, hospital admissions and a short supply of vaccines. NHS Tees had worked closely with GPs to identify the extent of current stocks of vaccine and to make sure that such supplies were moved around to ensure that they were placed where they were most needed. The Joint Committee was keen to ascertain if such arrangements would continue if proved necessary given the changes to and ultimate abolition of Primary Care Trusts. It was also suggested that information be sought regarding the role of GPs in encouraging the take up of flu vaccinations.

In terms of other suggested scrutiny topics reference was made to the Joint Committee's previous consideration of the new Out of Hours service the contract of which had recently been awarded to Northern Doctors Urgent Care. It was suggested that it might be useful for the Joint Committee to receive an update on how the service had been developed.

Members considered other possible topics of investigation such as hospital waiting times. As an initial step in the process it was suggested that each local authority examine and provide information on their respective areas for the Joint Committee's overall consideration.

The Joint Committee agreed that they should continue to receive information on scrutiny work programmes and final scrutiny reports from the constituent local authorities. Reference was made to recent reports such as the designation of James Cook University Hospital as a Major Trauma Centre by Middlesbrough Council and a report relating to Stroke Services by Darlington Borough Council.

It was considered prudent for the Joint Committee to allow a degree of flexibility within the work programme to deal with issues as and when they arose by the local NHS especially with regard to the significant changes taking place in the NHS.

Members gave initial consideration to the frequency of meetings of the Joint Committee. It was suggested that further consideration could be given to the matter but it was agreed that it would be prudent for the Joint Committee to meet within the next six weeks in order to have an opportunity to submit observations regarding arrangements currently being pursued by the local NHS in respect of the preparation for the winter period.

AGREED as follows: -

1. That it be recommended that the suggested topics for scrutiny investigation as outlined above form the basis of the Scrutiny Work Programme of the Joint Committee for the 2011/2012 Municipal Year which included:-
 - (i) to deal with issues as and when they arose by the local NHS;
 - (ii) preparation by the local NHS for the winter period;
 - (iii) implications of NHS reforms with particular regard to joint commissioning arrangements across the Tees Valley and North East;
 - (iv) hospital waiting times;
 - (v) to receive an update on the Out of Hours Contract;
 - (vi) to receive information on final scrutiny reports from constituent authorities.
2. That the first topic of scrutiny investigation be the preparation by the local NHS for the winter period.
3. That a further report on the Protocol for the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee including the appointment of a Vice-Chair be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.