

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA



Thursday 12 November 2015

10.00 am

In Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillors Ainslie, S Akers-Belcher, Belcher, Cook, Lawton and Martin-Wells.

Standards Co-opted Members; Mr Norman Rollo and Ms Clare Wilson.

Parish Council Representatives: Parish Councillor J Cambridge (Headland) and Parish Councillor B Walker (Greatham).

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 3. MINUTES**
 - 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015 *(to follow)*.
- 4. AUDIT ITEMS**

None.
- 5. STANDARDS ITEMS**
 - 5.1 Non Statutory Sanctions – *Monitoring Officer*



6. STATUTORY SCRUTINY ITEMS

6.1 End of Life / Palliative Care in the Community –HealthWatch Evidence:

- i) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Manager*
- ii) HealthWatch Evidence – *Presentation by the HealthWatch Manager*

6.2 Update on Alternative Provider Medical Services Contracts in Hartlepool

- i) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Manager*
- ii) NHS England Report

6.3 Service Development at the University Hospital of Hartlepool - Bowelscope - *Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Chief Executive, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust*

7. MINUTES FROM THE RECENT MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

None.

8. MINUTES FROM THE RECENT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH

None.

9. MINUTES FROM RECENT MEETING OF TEES VALLEY HEALTH SCRUTINY JOINT COMMITTEE

9.1 Minutes for the meeting on the 24 July 2015.

10. MINUTES FROM RECENT MEETING OF SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

10.1 Minutes for the meeting on the 4 September 2015.

11. NORTH EAST JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY UPDATE

11.1 Minutes of the 31 July 2015 / Verbal Update from the meeting on the 1 October 2015.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

For Information:

Date of next meeting: Thursday 10 December 2015 at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

12th November 2015



Report of: Monitoring Officer

Subject: NON STATUTORY SANCTIONS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 It has previously been raised in meetings of full Council whether or not, there could be developed a 'non statutory sanctions' regime to mitigate the impact of the removal of sanctions that had been embedded in the earlier ethical standards framework. Further, that such an initiative could safeguard and promote the highest possible standards and adherence to the Council's Code of Conduct. This theme was also reflected in the report of the Chief Executive Officer to Council on the 17th September and this subsequent report is brought before the Committee, owing to their responsibility surrounding 'standards functions', allowing an overview upon this topic, seeking the Committee's views for a report to be ultimately received by Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000, had introduced principles which would govern the conduct of Members and co-opted Members of 'relevant authorities' in England and Police Authorities in Wales. Those relevant authorities would be obligated to adopt a model Code of Conduct with a concurrent duty upon Members and co-opted Members to comply with the provisions of that Code. Further, under this statute each relevant authority had to establish a Standards Committee to;
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Members and Co-opted Members of the Authority, and
 - Assisting those Members and Co-opted Members of the Authority to observe the Authority's Code of conduct.
- 2.2 In addition there would be a body known as 'Standards Board for England' with power to issue guidance to authorities to assist with their compliance of the duties surrounding these particular provisions. Although, from 2008 a local investigation and determination process was developed, this regime

allowed the imposition of ‘sanctions’ which was provided through legislation and whereupon a ‘finding of fault’ i.e. that a Member or Co-opted Member had not complied with the provisions of the Code of Conduct, that individual could be;

- Suspended or partially suspended from being a Member or Co-opted Member of the relevant authority concerned, or
- Disqualified for being, or becoming (whether by election or otherwise), a Member of that or any other relevant authority.

2.3 The period of any suspension or partial suspension initially could not exceed one year or, if shorter, the remainder of the person’s term of office. Where a decision was made by a case tribunal a maximum five year disqualification could be imposed where a finding of fault had been made. The local assessment and determination process, limited such suspensions and disqualifications to a maximum period of six months.

2.4 The Localism Act, 2011 whilst retaining (Section 27 of the Act refers) a ‘duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct’, introduced a revision whereby on a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Authority needed to decide ‘whether to take action in relation to the Member or Co-opted Member, and what action to take’ (Section 28 (11)). Hence, the Localism Act had moved away from a sanctions based system to that based on ‘actions’. Councils were still required to operate a Code of Conduct and ‘when viewed as a whole, it is consistent with the following principles’;

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

2.5 Furthermore, the requirements of the Code of Conduct must also include the provision for the registration of pecuniary interests and interests, other than pecuniary interests. In addition, there needed to be ‘arrangements’ under which allegations could be investigated and arrangements whereby decisions on those allegations can be made. The Code would operate when a Member acted in their ‘official capacity’ and the Council has adopted ‘arrangements’ to fully confirm with the Localism Act, 2011 and it has also adopted procedures and accompanying documentation to accord with the operation of an ethical standards regime consistent with the Localism Act, 2011.

3. **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

3.1 Although, as mentioned, there has been a movement away from the previous statutory sanctions regime in England, this is not the case in other

jurisdictions. The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act, 2000, still provides for a model Code of Conduct and the operation of a Standards Commission. Notably, action on finding of a contravention of the Code of Conduct can allow for formal ‘censure’ of the individual involved but also powers of suspension (not exceeding one year) and also disqualification, not exceeding a period of five years. Similarly, in Wales the Public Service Ombudsman (PSOW) has power to suspend and disqualify in cases of a proven breach of the Code of Conduct. This also applies to Northern Ireland wherein the Northern Ireland Ombudsman has powers of suspension and disqualification retained through the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

3.2 However, there are some notable restraints upon the operation of such sanctions.

3.3 In the case of *Heesom –v- Public Service Ombudsman for Wales* [2014] E W H C 1504 (Admin) (15 May 2014) the High Court considered a ‘sanction’ of disqualification taken upon an errant Member of a Welsh Local Authority. In 2009 an allegation had been made of misconduct of the Member involved who although had stood down from being a Member of the Executive, still remained in office as a Councillor. A case tribunal found on 14 separate allegations which comprised elements of bullying and generally conduct likely to bring the office of the Councillor into disrepute. The case tribunal disqualified the Member for a period of 2 ½ years. On appeal, the High Court indicated that an ‘absence of criminality, did not render the sanction unlawful’. However, there was conflict with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to freedom of expression and information). This particular Article provides for such freedoms which are in ‘accordance to the law’ and ‘necessary in a democratic society’. In this instance, the Court felt that the period of disqualification (which involved a large part of the remainder the Councillor’s term of office) was ‘excessive’. In replacing the sanction with an 18 months period of disqualification the Court found that the ‘minimum’ sanction possible should be imposed which is ‘consistent with the aims of maintaining standards in public life’.

4. NON STATUTORY SANCTIONS

4.1 In looking at the application of a ‘non statutory sanctions’ regime, the Council should be mindful of a decision in *R v Broadland District Council ex parte June Lashley* (2001) EWCA Civ179. This case had arisen through allegations of misconduct of a Councillor, but which proceeded the introduction of the ethical framework under the Local Government Act, 2000. Following an investigation, the Council had determined that certain ‘non statutory sanctions’ should be imposed, which were subsequently reviewed by the High Court. Those ‘sanctions’ were as follows;

- New internal arrangements i.e. changes to working practices,
- Drawing up a protocol for Member/ Officer arrangements(*)
- Giving instructions to staff

- Giving advice or making observations either generally or specifically about a Councillors conduct (*)
- Reporting matters to the Police, or to the Authority's auditors
- A recommendation to the full Authority to remove a Councillor from a Committee.

- 4.2 The 'sanctions' marked with an asterisk (*) were deemed by the Court to be 'potentially ultra vires' i.e. beyond the legal powers of the Local Authority. In this regard, the Court felt that much would depend on the context of the 'arrangements' or 'instructions'. Further, where such arrangements/ instructions were more 'onerous' than others, the same would be open to challenge. A court also observed the case of *R v Sheffield CC ex parte Chadwick* (1985) 84 LGR 563, wherein it was acknowledged that a Councillor could not demand entry to the Authority's premises 'at any hour of the day or night'. The Councillor also needed to go through the 'usual channels' to obtain access to papers and information. Hence, such 'restrictions' need to be both reasonable and proportionate with a legitimate aim. In the *Lashley* case the Court made comment;

'One needs always to have in mind that anything that fetters the otherwise appropriate activities of a democratically elected representative must, be subjected, to the most searching and most rigorous scrutiny and is something which requires the most cogent and compelling justification'.

5. RECALL

- 5.1 Members may be familiar with the Recall of MP's Act, 2015, whereby on certain pre conditions being satisfied there could be a 'recall petition' which if successful can require a Member of Parliament to vacate their office and thereby enforcing a By Election. Those pre conditions are as follows;
- A report from the Committee on Standards where the Member is suspended for at least 10 sitting days (or equivalent to at least 14 days)
 - Conviction of an offence (of providing false and misleading information upon allowances) under Section 10 of the Parliamentary Standards Act, 2009.
 - Any other relevant conviction.
- 5.2 It should be noted, that Section 1 of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1981 does prescribe that on conviction and sentence for more than a year, a Member would be disqualified from membership of the House of Commons. The Act of 2015 provides that where the above preconditions are satisfied this allows a 'recall petition', where if 10% of the registered electors of that constituency vote in favour of the recall of their elected representative, then there would be a resulting by-election, but in which the Member affected could still stand for election.
- 5.3 Along similar lines, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames issued a document titled "Renewing Kingston's Democracy" which their Council on

14th July, 2015 referred to the appropriate committee to move forward with a system of “recall”. This has comparisons with the above legislation insofar as a petition for a By-Election which had the support of 33% of the local electorate (through an on-line petition which would be advertised over a three month period) would allow for a By-Election in the following circumstances;

- If the Councillors attendance falls below 20% over a Municipal Year.
- If a Councillor attends fewer than two full Council meetings over a Municipal Year.
- If the Councillor has been convicted of a crime over and the period for any appeal has expired without the conviction being overturned.
- If a Councillor moves from his/her main residence outside of the boundaries of the Borough.

- 5.4 It will be noted, such grounds for the initiation of such petition have a very wide application and are not simply confined to allegations which ordinarily relate to complaints which engage the Members Code of Conduct. Nevertheless, it imports a system which puts the issue of the Member’s presence in elected office under the scrutiny of the local electorate. As indicated, this is a wide application of potential “sanctions” and is not necessarily consistent with other authorities Codes of Conduct. Attached at **Appendix 1** is a protocol, which will essentially operate as an addendum to the Members Code of Conduct which is very much formative in nature and would need the engagement of all borough Councillors to consider and develop. **THE PROTOCOL IS IN DRAFT AND PURELY FOR INFORMATION AND FURTHER DISCUSSION AT THIS TIME.**

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 It is widely accepted the “inadequacy” of the present ‘action’ based system, where there has been a finding of a breach of the Members Code of Conduct. Also, it should be noted, that it is encouraged the early and timely resolution of all disputes/ matters of complaint but not necessarily those more serious matters which are required to go through a process of investigation and the findings of that investigation to be made known through the consideration of the Audit and Governance Committee. The “Lashley case” recognised that there can be “non statutory local protocols / guidance” and this could cover member/officer protocols, restrictions on the use of Members IT, Planning Codes of Practice and the Registration of Gifts and Hospitality. All of these matters have been addressed either within the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, supplementary codes and guidance documents or otherwise within formal Council policies and procedures. It was also indicated that the following “non statutory actions” could also be utilised;

- Reprimand
- Withdrawal of facilities
- Removal from Committee (either through “group action” or through the approval of full Council.)

It should also be remembered that the Localism Act 2011, under Section 34 provides for a criminal sanction where a person commits an offence without reasonable excuse and they participate in a discussion or otherwise vote where they have a pecuniary disclosable interest or seek to provide false or misleading information or are reckless in such a scenario. There have been convictions under this provision, but prosecutions have been relatively few, at this time. Of note, reference to this provision which is instigated through the Director of Public Prosecutions is mentioned within the Council’s own Code of Conduct. There are also potential breaches of the criminal law by elected official in relation to bribery, misconduct in public office and generally under the provisions in relation to theft, false accounting and similar miscreant behaviour. There is also potential civil liability in relation to misfeasance in public office, defamation, harassment and potential other civil infringements.

Members would wish to see a robust, resilient but above all fair sanction system, wherein there would be the expectation of adherence and conformity by all elected Members of the Borough Council. Members would need to be comfortable with what they are “signing up to” and that these “non statutory sanctions” are reasonable and proportionate and are not otherwise excessive. There is also a role of those Members who are affiliated to a political group where there can be internal party discipline which also puts an onus on those “Independent” members for some form of self regulation would have equal application to themselves. I believe that all Councillors need to be assured that these “non statutory sanctions” should not be ultra vires and do depend (as in the Kingston “Recall” initiative) that there will be the general expectation upon an errant member that they would comply with a sanction that was commensurate with a breach of the Code of Conduct and taking account of their representational role and wider constituency interests.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Committee consider this report and provide comments on the attached protocol.
- 7.2 That the Committee consider recommendations to be made to the Finance and Policy Committee and ultimately to Council and also whether or not there should be a Members Seminar to fully engage with all 33 elected Members before formal consideration of this issue by full Council.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has an ethical standards framework that is fully consistent with the Localism Act, 2011. There are additional provisions contained within the Council's Code of Conduct which go beyond the "minimum requirements" contained within the above legislation. That said, Members have made comment that they would wish to consider "non statutory sanctions" owing to the inadequacy of the present standards regime with emphasis solely upon "actions". The Committee is therefore asked to consider the attached protocol but which needs further exploration and the full and committed involvement of all elected representatives. Materially, the views of the Council's Independent Persons are sought through the Audit and Governance Committee and also the general observations of the Committee.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10. CONTACT OFFICER

Peter Devlin
Chief Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
01429 523003
peter.devlin@hartlepool.gov.uk

PROTOCOL

Conduct and Behaviour of Members of Hartlepool Borough Council

1. This protocol is endorsed by those Councillors as shown in the Annex (and any supplementary annex) to this document. All signatories to this protocol will use their reasonable endeavours to ensure that its provisions are complied with when an individual acts in their official capacity as an elected Member of Hartlepool Borough Council under the principles stated within the Council's Code of Conduct.
2. This protocol is intended to have application where a complaint has been made about the conduct of an Elected Member of Hartlepool Borough Council and where the matter of complaint has been referred or otherwise has come to the attention of the Monitoring Officer under Section 28 (6) of the Localism Act, 2011.
3. On receipt of a complaint the Monitoring Officer in unison with the Independent Persons shall endeavour (in line with adopted assessment criteria) seek to resolve the complaint through action that is commensurate and proportionate to the matter of complaint. An initial meeting will take place as soon as is practicable from the receipt of the complaint with the Subject Member, the Monitoring Officer and the Independent Persons. That meeting will determine whether or not the Member recognises and accepts a finding of fault on their part and if so, they shall act in such a manner that safeguards the Council's reputation and their own role as an elected representative of Hartlepool Borough Council. This will be through the Member undertaking such appropriate action under Section 28 (11) of the Localism Act 2011, as the Monitoring Officer and the Independent Persons shall determine and may include the following;
 - The provision of an apology to the complainant (and any other interested / affected parties)
 - Training of the Member on the Council's Code of Conduct and the ethical framework provisions and such related matters, as may be determined.
 - The withdrawal of facilities, proportionate to the breach but not prohibiting the Member exercising his/her representational role.
 - The engagement of the Member in a form of mediation / conciliation that might assist in the resolution of the matter of complaint.
 - Peer mentoring.
 - Of the Members own volition, not to attend meetings of Council, a Committee, Sub-Committee or Forum for a relevant period of time as agreed between the Subject Member and the Monitoring Officer.

4. Where a Member engages in conduct that is considered to be sufficiently grave and/or otherwise damages the reputation of the Council, the Borough or the office and role as Councillor, they will agree the following action, pending the outcome of a formal investigation;

- Absent themselves from Council, Committee, Sub-Committee or Forum during the period of any investigation (*). (The Period of absence shall not in any event exceed a period longer than 6 months.)
- An approach to be made to the Group Leader, if the Member is affiliated to a political group for any internal disciplinary proceedings that may need to be instigated.
- Not to engage with a prescribed individual, provided such restrictions are lawful and proportionate in the manner of their application.
- The actions in paragraph 3 above be given consideration as being supplementary measures to be adopted.

()Section 85 (Local Government Act 1982) prescribes that failure to attend a meeting for a period of 6 consecutive months, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority, will lead to cessation of office.*

5. If following an investigation or otherwise a matter being reported to the Audit and Governance Committee, the Committee upon hearing the representations from the Subject Member will;

- Refer the matter to Council for the consideration of the Subject Member being removed from a Committee or Sub-Committee,
- Agree that the Subject Member should forgo their allowance for such period as determined, in accordance with the Scheme of Member Allowances (Part 6 of the Council's Constitution refers),
- Agree with the Subject Member a period of disqualification commensurate and proportionate to the finding of fault and determined as being reasonable by the Committee,
- That where there has been a finding of fault and that Member has failed to agree to the imposition of a non statutory sanction, the Committee may recommend that an online petition be organised for a period of 3 months, following the Committee decision. Where at least 25% of the registered electors of the particular Ward which the Subject Member represents agree to the holding of a By-Election then there would be the expectation of that Member resigning from office without prejudice to their standing in the subsequent By-Election. Such a By-Election will be in accordance with applicable electoral rules and regulations.*

*Note- * Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 prescribes grounds where a person may be disqualified for election and from holding office as a Member of a Local Authority.*

This protocol may be amended, varied or extended through agreement by the Members of Hartlepool Borough Council.

DATED

ANNEX
[list of Councillors]

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

12 November 2015



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: End of Life / Palliative Care in the Community -
Healthwatch Evidence - Covering Report

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce a presentation from Healthwatch for consideration as part of the Committees End of Life / Palliative Care investigation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on the 3 September 2015 agreed the Scope and Terms of Reference for its investigation into End of Life / Palliative Care in the Community.
- 2.2 As part of the investigation, a presentation will today be given by the Healthwatch Manager, Christopher Akers-Belcher, detailing the findings of its work in relation to the provision of End of Life / Palliative Care services in Hartlepool.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the content of the presentation and seek clarification, as and where required.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To inform the Committees investigation.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 None

6. CONTACT OFFICER

Joan Stevens – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department – Legal Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 284142
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

12 November 2015



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: Update on Alternative Provider Medical Services
Contracts in Hartlepool - Covering Report

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members that representatives from the Durham, Darlington and Tees Area Team will be in attendance at today's meeting to provide Members of the Audit and Governance Committee with an update in relation to Alternative Provider Medical Services Contracts in Hartlepool.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Audit and Governance Committee was asked to formulate a response in relation to a review of alternative provider medical services (APMS) in Hartlepool. On the 13 November 2014, the Committee was advised that contracts for the GP surgeries under review in Hartlepool had been extended in the short term, with:
- The Hartfields Surgery anticipated to receive a new long term contract due to an increase in patient numbers; and
 - Work continuing on the longer term future of GP surgery provision in the south of the town.
- 2.2 Representatives from NHS England (Durham, Darlington and Tees Area Team) will be in attendance at today's meeting to present a further update, as attached at **Item 6.2(ii)**.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members receive the attached update and seek clarification, as and where required.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To inform the Committees investigation.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.1 None

6. CONTACT OFFICER

Joan Stevens – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department – Legal Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 284142
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk



Update on Alternative Provider Medical Services Contracts Hartlepool Borough Council

Background

In 2014, NHS England Cumbria and the North East, reviewed Alternative Provider Medical Service (APMS) contracts for general practice that were due to come to an end and a briefing was provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the consultation process.

The briefing outlined that the APMS contracts were established on a time-limited basis (unlike the majority of general practice contracts that run “in perpetuity”) in 2008 and highlighted the proposals for these contracts with options being as follows;

- Re-procuring and letting a new contract for the service on a like-for-like basis
- Re-procuring a similar service but operated under a different service model (e.g. encouraging the practice to run as a branch surgery/outreach service of a larger practice)
- Ending the contract and supporting patients to register with other nearby practices (with the other practices receiving payment to enable them to increase their current capacity)

In Hartlepool, there were three APMS contracts that were reviewed:

- Fens Medical Practice, 434 Catcote Road, Fens Estate, Hartlepool, TS25 2LS. The services provided at this practice are equivalent to core GMS services.
- IntraHealth Wynyard Road Primary Care Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool, TS25 3DQ. The services provided at this practice are equivalent to core GMS services.
- Hartfield’s Medical Practice, Hartfields Extra Care Village, Hartfields Manor, Hartlepool, TS26 0US. The services provided at this practice are equivalent to core GMS services.



Current Position

Following the review and the consultation undertaken a decision was taken by NHS England to extend the contracts until 31 March 2016 and all providers agreed to extend the contracts.

In relation to Hartfield's Medical Practice, NHS England is now in a position to commence a procurement exercise to secure an alternative provider of the service from 01 April 2016. An invitation to tender for the service as either a standalone APMS contract or as a branch of an existing contractor in the Hartlepool area will be advertised in the next few weeks. The service will be delivered from the same site and for the same contracted hours as is currently provided and therefore patients will see no change in service.

For the Fens and Wynyard Road contracts, NHS England has agreed to extend the contract further until 30 September 2016 whilst we undertake engagement activity with patients and stakeholders to inform a forthcoming procurement exercise. A new provider will be secured with a view to commence services from 01 October 2016. The engagement plans are currently being developed and we will contact the Committee in due course regarding these plans.

Summary

Whilst these steps do not change the challenges that practices with small list sizes face (either in retaining or attracting staff or providing an attractive business proposition to potential bidders for the contracts), NHS England hopes that the outlined proposals will give the scrutiny committee assurance that services will continue to be provided in the local area.

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

12 November 2015



Report of: North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Subject: Service Development at the University Hospital of Hartlepool - Bowelscope

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The government is keen to improve detection rates of bowel cancer in the 55s and over. The Trust was one of the early pilots for bowelscoping (flexible sigmoidoscopy). Bowel cancer itself can take 10 to 15 years to develop so early detection before a person is experiencing any symptoms means treatment can be given which will prevent a cancer from developing.

2.2 The current bowel screening programme covers people 60 and over and involves people being sent a home test which can pick up tiny traces of blood in their stools (poo) which can indicate bowel abnormalities or possibly bowel cancer. The endoscopy unit at the University Hospital of North Tees is the centre for following up abnormalities for people across the whole of Teesside and parts of Durham and North Yorkshire under this programme.

2.3 The bowelscope screening is a new additional once only test which is a quick, simple bowel examination for people aged 55 or over which can identify abnormalities which if left could develop into bowel cancer long before a person has any symptoms.

2.4 The test involves the person using a home enema before attending the endoscopy unit where a specially trained nurse or a doctor uses an endoscope (tube) to examine the bowel.

2.5 The team, based in the Rutherford Morison Unit at the University Hospital of Hartlepool, has had excellent feedback on NHS Choices from patients who have had any fears about their dignity allayed by a compassionate, caring and professional team.

2.6 The service now offers three sessions a week at the University Hospital of Hartlepool (30 patients in total each week).

- 2.7 A programme is underway to invite people 55 and over living in the Hartlepool area for screening to improve early detection, treatment, outcomes and survival rates for what is still one of the country's biggest killers.
- 2.8 In addition to the Bowelscope screening programme being introduced to University Hospital Hartlepool a number of other services have also increased their input into the hospital:
- Respiratory Services are providing more outpatient clinics.
 - Gastroenterology Service outpatient clinics have increased in Hartlepool and in Peterlee
 - The Cardiology Service has increased both outpatient clinic numbers and diagnostic testing.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the content of the presentation and seek clarification, as and where required.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To inform the Committee of service development at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 None

6. CONTACT OFFICER

Joan Stevens – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department – Legal Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 284142
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

TEES VALLEY JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

24 July 2015

The meeting commenced at 10:00 am at the Redcar & Cleveland Leisure and Community Heart

Present:

Councillor Ian Jeffrey (In the Chair) (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council:

Councillors: K King and R Norton

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council:

Councillors: E Cunningham, M Javed and L Hall

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Councillors: J Ainslie

Also Present: Mark Cotton, North East Ambulance Service

Officers: Lucy Donaghue, RCBC
Alison Pearson, RCBC
Peter Mennear, SBC
Joan Stevens, HBC

1. Appointment of the Chair

MOVED BY Councillor R Norton and duly seconded by Councillor J Ainslie that Councillor I Jeffrey be elected as Chair for the ensuing Municipal Year 2015/16.

The motion was put to the vote, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED that on the successful motion of Councillor R Norton and duly seconded by Councillor J Ainslie that Councillor I Jeffrey be elected as Chair for the ensuing Municipal Year 2015/16.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

The Scrutiny Support Officer advised that the position of the Vice Chair

would need to be filled by a Member of Middlesbrough Borough Council.

The Chair advised that as there were no Members present from Middlesbrough the appointment be deferred until the next meeting of the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Newall, Scott and Taylor – Darlington Borough Council.

Councillors Akers-Belcher, Cook and Martin-Wells – Hartlepool Borough Council.

Councillors Biswas, Dryden and Walker – Middlesbrough Borough Council.

4. Declarations of Interest

None.

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2015

Confirmed.

6. Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Draft Protocol

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report confirming the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee protocol.

The protocol was last amended by the Joint Committee at its meeting in January 2015. The key changes were to remove the requirement for a representative from each local authority to be in attendance for a quorum but to retain the requirement for six Members to be in attendance.

In addition, it was agreed that the meeting frequency would be reduced to quarterly.

The reasons for the changes were to make the most effective use of officer and Member time and increasing attendance overall as for a period of time, the Committee had suffered from a lack of attendance and had been unable to fulfil its scrutiny role effectively with a number of meetings having been inquorate.

In light of its recent review, no further changes are suggested to the protocol at this point in time:- **NOTED**

7. Monitoring of the North East Ambulance Service

Mark Cotton, the Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement from the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) gave an update to the Joint Committee providing them with the following information:

- The findings of an internal report on how NEAS evaluated and audited the skill levels of third party operators
- Information on complaints against third party providers and monitoring arrangements
- How NEAS gained assurance about the qualification of staff provided by third parties

Ambulances were parked around the region to maximise deployment. The ambulance stations were not used as much now as they had been previously.

The Chair commented that the report reflected that the service was doing well by both regional and national standards. The Chair asked if the service received many hoax calls. Members were advised that the service did not receive many hoax calls but there was a frequent caller policy in place. The NEAS worked closely with its partners to address any issues in this regard.

The Chair commented that ambulance services could share community buildings such as the Police and Fire service buildings. There were shared services at the Redcar Fire station.

A Member asked why response times were down and what was being done to improve this. Members were advised that drops in performance figures were taken very seriously by NEAS. There had been some severe weather last winter which could have contributed to the drop in performance figures. Figures were monitored over a period of time and an analysis would take place to see where improvements could be made. The NEAS had 103% coverage in the area to accommodate any last minute shortfall.

The Chair asked if there had been any element of under financing in the service. Members were advised that historically there had been a low level of investment and there were some challenges around this. A pilot scheme was being set up to roll out the transformation of NHS services.

A Member asked to what extent Cleveland Police involved with the service. Members were advised that NEAS worked very closely with the Police. They understood that Police forces were also under a lot of pressure. A triage system was in place for patients. There was also operation ginger which involved paramedics and the Police working together in the same vehicle. This was mainly used in areas that were known to require police backup.

A Member asked if NEAS had been consulted on the rebuilding of Grangetown Fire station.

The Chair asked who made the decision of which hospital to transport patients to. Members were advised that it was the decision of the paramedic as to where the most appropriate place to treat the patient and provide definitive care was.

A Member asked about the recruitment and retention of paramedics. Members were advised that it took two years to train a paramedic. NEAS had also doubled their student intake. A number of open days had been held at universities for students. A C1/D1 driving licence was also required to drive an ambulance and it cost £1000 to take the test. NEAS paid for these tests when required. A programme had also been started to recruit paramedics from Europe.

The Chair asked how many ambulance trusts were there. Members were advised that there were 10 ambulance trusts in England and they met on a regular basis to discuss best practice and workload.

A Member asked how overtime staff undertook to cover sickness absence. Members were advised that overtime was monitored very closely as certain break times were required. Any staff sickness was now reported to a nurse rather than a line manager.

The Chair asked for further details around serious incidents. Members were advised that NEAS were very good at recording any incidents. Any serious incidents were investigated. Further details could be provided.

Decision

1. That the report be noted.
2. That further details be provided around serious incidents.

8. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report which sought Members views on the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny work programme for the forthcoming year 2015/16.

The work of the joint committee needed to be complementary to the individual health scrutiny work programmes for the constituent authorities and deal with any issues that affected the population across the wider boundaries of the Tees Valley.

Last year the Joint Committee agreed to continue to undertake regular monitoring of the North East Ambulance Service and during the course of the year and also received reports on a variety of topics including:

- Suicide prevention
- Dental Care Services
- winter planning
- short breaks for children with complex needs

For the 2015/16 work programme, suggestions received so far included:

- Continued monitoring of NEAS
- Co-commissioning of Primary Care by the CCG and NHS England
- Alcohol Misuse –oversight of the plans across Tees Valley and how coordinated the plans are across health and social care.
- Better Care Fund – how well was that working and what were the plans to extend?
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Trust – update on the walk-in facility at Roseberry Park was requested by Committee after 12 months of operation
- TEWV CQC inspections and action plans to address areas for improvement
- Digital Healthcare – follow up on the Digital Healthcare pilot being undertaken in Hartlepool and Stockton.
- Quality Accounts

Members made a number of suggestions including:

- Mental Health Issues
- South Tees CCG Acute Services
- Dental Practice Locations
- Better Care Fund

The Chair suggested that a briefing note be circulated to the committee on each of the suggested areas so that they are able to draw up a list of priorities. A number of the suggestions were being looked at by the individual Local Authorities and would not need repeating across the Tees Valley. It was also suggested that a briefing note be provided from each Local Authority in relation to what they had covered, and what they would be looking at in the next year.

Decision

1. That the report be noted.
2. That briefing notes be provided to the Joint Committee Members on each of the suggested topics so a priority list can be established.
3. That a briefing note be provided by each Local Authority in relation to what they had covered in respect of the above suggestions.

9. Future Meeting Arrangements

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report seeking approval of the future meeting dates for the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee for the forthcoming year 2015/16.

The proposed meeting dates for 2015/16 municipal year were:

- 14 October 2015
- 21 January 2016
- 15 April 2016

It was suggested that all meetings start at 10:00am and would be held in the Redcar & Cleveland Leisure and Community Heart: - **NOTED.**

SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

4 September 2015

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)
Councillor Marjorie James, Hartlepool Borough Council
Clare Clark, Head of Community Safety and Engagement
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Gordon Lang, Chief Superintendent, Cleveland Police
Barry Coppinger, Police and Crime Commissioner
John Bentley, Safe in Tees Valley

In accordance with Council procedure rule 5.2 (ii) Mal Suggitt was in attendance as Substitute for Gordon Lang, Gilly Marshall was in attendance as substitute for Stewart Tagg and Richard Parker was in attendance as substitute for Barbara Gill

Also present:

Councillor Jim Ainslie, HBC
Sarah Wilson, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
Emma Roebuck, Chief Officer, GADD

Officers: Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

11. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, Chief Superintendent Gordon Lang and Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston, Cleveland Police, Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services, Barbara Gill, Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company, Stewart Tagg, Housing Hartlepool, Karen Hawkins, Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Clinical Commissioning Group and Steve Johnson, Cleveland Fire Authority

12. Declarations of Interest

None

13. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2015

Confirmed.

14. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 6 – Substance Misuse Strategy Group – A Member expressed thanks to the Chair and other partners in relation to the action taken in response to concerns conveyed at the last meeting regarding the problem of individuals drinking in excess on trains. The Member was pleased to report that from personal observations there appeared to have been improvements in this regard. Members were advised that arrangements had been made for a representative from the British Transport Police to attend the next meeting of the Partnership. The Chair highlighted that a Joint Communication Strategy that had been agreed had proved to be successful.

In response to another Member's concerns regarding a recent incident of racist behaviour on the train service from Newcastle, the Chair suggested that this issue be fed back to the British Transport Police in advance of the next meeting.

Decision

That the issues raised in relation to racist behaviour, as set out above, be referred to the British Transport Police in advance of the next meeting.

15. Addressing Barriers to Reporting Hate Crime Affecting the LGBT Communities *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Purpose of report

To present a report commissioned by Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner into the barriers to the reporting of hate crime affecting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community in the policing area of Cleveland Police.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods introduced the report which provided background information to an event hosted by the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner which sought to explore hate crime affecting Lesbian, Gay and Transgender people in the force area.

Gay Advice Darlington/Durham (GADD) had been tasked to provide a report on the barriers to reporting and how to reduce or remove those barriers and improving the relationship between the public sector criminal justice services and outcomes for the LGBT community, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report.

Representatives from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and GADD, who were in attendance, presented the report on barriers to reporting of LGBT hate crime in Tees Valley which included details of the methodology used, participants, results of the survey, conclusions, recommendations together with specific actions. The key actions were as outlined below:-

- Establish a Steering Group to agree the overall strategy in response to the recommendations
- Hate Crime Training for Police Officers
- Awareness Training for Police Officers
- Indirect reporting of hate crime
- Building trust
- Arrange sharing of publication of leaflets and information on the process and expectation on how the police/CPS process hate crime after it was reported.
- Work with local community organisations to make the information leaflet accessible to as many people as possible via all possible media.
- Re-evaluate current hate crime reporting mechanisms and prioritise using community based groups to support individuals through the process rather than the current generic third party reporting system that was failing victims of hate crime
- Build an ongoing sustainable model of community engagement and participation to build trust between the police/CPS and relevant communities

In the lengthy discussion that followed presentation of the report, Members debated issues arising from the report. Concerns were expressed regarding the anonymity afforded to perpetrators involved in hate crime via social media sites to which the Cleveland Police representative outlined the reasons for such protection arrangements. In response to a request for clarification as to whether the work had identified any specifics around social media reporting, the representative from GADD outlined the main findings in terms of hate crime via social media sites. It was highlighted that anonymous bullying via social media methods was often hard to trace and

sometimes difficult to prove within the Criminal Justice System. There were limitations as to what could be done to address this. The importance of individuals understanding privacy settings was emphasised. The challenges of third party reporting centres were highlighted and reference was made to the evidence that suggested that victims of hate crime were more confident of a satisfactory outcome if the incident was reported via a community organisation that was also able to support the individual through the process. The benefits of increasing community confidence and signposting individuals to specialist community organisations were outlined.

The Partnership discussed the options of utilising restorative justice measures as an alternative to the criminal justice system including the challenges of encouraging take-up. The Chair commented on the importance of ensuring restorative justice approaches were carefully implemented to assist with a positive outcome.

The Partnership was advised of National Hate Crime Awareness Week 12-16 October where a number of activities were being planned across Cleveland with a different strand of hate crime providing the focus for each day of that week.

Decision

That the contents of the report and comments of Partnership Members be noted.

16. Scrutiny Investigation into Hate Crime – Report and Action Plan *(Audit and Governance Committee and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Purpose of report

To seek consideration of the Audit and Governance Committee's report following completion of its Hate Crime Investigation and agree the Action Plan in response to the findings and recommendations contained within it.

Issue(s) for consideration

A representative from Audit and Governance Committee presented the report which outlined the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusion and subsequent recommendations following the Committee's investigation into Hate Crime.

To assist the Partnership in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations, an action plan had been produced, a copy of which was attached at Appendix 1.

In the discussion that followed concerns were expressed regarding the issue of hate crime and various examples were shared with the Partnership. Members were pleased to note the recommendation to raise awareness in this regard to ensure the most vulnerable victims were protected. The various methods of abuse were debated during which disappointment was expressed in relation to the inappropriate use of the press and social media as a means of targeting individuals. The difficulties preventing such activities were highlighted. Emphasis was placed upon the need to protect and support individuals who came forward to report hate crime. A Member commented on the invaluable service provided by Victim Support Officers and took the opportunity to thank officers for their support.

In concluding the debate, the Chair requested that the concerns regarding the inappropriate use of social media as a means of targeting individuals be referred to the Communications Group for consideration.

The Chair welcomed the report and thanked the Audit and Governance Committee for undertaking the investigation.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the Audit and Governance Committee's investigation into hate crime in Hartlepool be approved.
- (ii) That the action plan, in response to the recommendations, be approved.
- (iii) That the concerns regarding the inappropriate use of the press and social media as a means of targeting individuals be referred to the Communications Group for consideration.

17. Reducing Re-Offending Group Update (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Purpose of report

To update the Partnership on progress in relation to the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan 2014/15.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Community Safety and Engagement presented the report which provided background information in relation to the strategy. Attached as an appendix to the report was the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan which provided an overview of progress made during 2015/16 and described some of the Task Group activity that had been undertaken to reduce re-offending in Hartlepool.

The Partnership was advised that although progress against the action plan

had been slow due to the transformation of rehabilitation services, key achievements in relation to the action plan included improving pathways out of re-offending, partnership working with needs of offenders and public safety at the heart of service planning and delivery of a local response to local problems through a better understanding of offending behaviour and impact of interventions.

In support of the report, the Chair welcomed Richard Parker from the Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company, who had also recently been appointed as Chair of the Group, who provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which focussed on the background and context to transforming rehabilitation and included the following issues:-

- 4 main aims
- Background to set up of Community Rehabilitation Companies
- In 2013 ARCC consortium established and in October 2014 identified as the 'preferred bidder'
- Overview of various partners of ARCC consortium
- Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company in Hartlepool – organisational set up including staffing structure, caseload, staff allocations
- Proposals
 - regular provision of proven re-offending data, charges and arrests
 - multi-agency case conferencing for Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs)
 - introduce 2nd tier in IOM based on Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) risk predictor
 - by shared working with partner agencies contribute where appropriate to SHP Action Plan

Challenges/Change Process

- All probation offices currently occupied by DTV CRC staff will be closed no later than 31 December 2015. 80 to 85% of the offender caseload will be seen in Community Justice Hubs. District Centres will be available for offenders who are not suitable for attendance at the hubs.
- Agile working – most staff will work mainly from the Criminal Justice Hubs but will also work from home and for some of the time at the offices of partner agencies
- New Technology – staff will be provided with laptops. The current administration system will be replaced as will the offender assessment system.

- Performance Management – service measures/targets are set and if not achieved will incur a financial penalty.
- Maintaining quality in the new world - staff to acquit themselves to new ways of working

The Partnership was advised that the Integrated Offender Management Hub Launch would be held on 22 September at 10.00 am at Holme House Prison to which all Partnership Members were invited to attend. Details would be provided under separate cover following the meeting.

With regard to the issue of reporting critically on proven convictions, it was noted that performance information relating to re-offending was outstanding. The representative from the Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company reported on the potential reasons for the delay and agreed to follow this up following the meeting.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report and progress made in delivering the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan be noted.
- (ii) That the representative from the Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company follow up outstanding performance information relating to re-offending for inclusion in future performance reports.

18. Domestic Violence Strategic Group Update (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of activity undertaken by the Hartlepool Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy Group during 2014/15.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods presented the report which provided background information in relation to the Domestic Violence and Abuse Group (DVAG). Attached as an appendix to the report was the Domestic Violence Action Plan which provided an overview of progress made during 2014/15 and described some of the partnership activity that had been undertaken to address domestic violence and abuse in Hartlepool.

Partnership Members were referred to prevention and early intervention work, partnership working and justice outcomes, as detailed in the report. Details of additional actions that had been identified as a result of a refresh of the Action Plan were provided. Good progress had been made by the Group over the last year with some notable new developments in place to safeguard individuals, children and their families from the impact of domestic abuse.

It was noted that the number of domestic abuse incidents in Hartlepool was also moving in the right direction having reduced year on year since 2011/12. There had been a number of positive outcomes for both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, details of which were provided. However, Hartlepool continued to experience high levels of domestic abuse and had the second highest rate of recorded domestic incidents per 1000 population in Cleveland Police force area. During 2013/14, 2166 domestic abuse incidents were recorded and of those 1046 children and young people were present in the home at the time of the incident.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report and progress made against the Domestic Violence and Abuse Action Plan.
- (ii) The Partnership noted the new actions included in the 2015/16 action plan.

19. Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance for Quarter 1 – April 2015 to June 2015 (inclusive)

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Community Safety and Engagement provided the Partnership with an overview of the Partnership's performance during Quarter 1, as set out in an appendix to the report. Information as a comparator with performance in the previous year was also provided. In presenting the report, the Head of Community Safety and Engagement highlighted salient positive and negative data and responded to a number of queries raised in relation to crime figures by type.

The potential reasons why crime figures had increased in the last year were debated. In response to some concerns raised regarding the increase in sexual offences in Hartlepool, it was reported that this was potentially as a result of individuals being encouraged to report crimes as well as the

increase in the number of people reporting historical crimes.

The Partnership was advised that the issues raised in relation to the disproportionate increase in crime figures was being fully explored by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee as part of their scrutiny work programme for this municipal year.

Decision

That the Quarter 1 performance figures and comments of Members be noted.

20. Proposed Closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Purpose of report

To inform the Safer Hartlepool Partnership of a report to Council following the Ministry of Justice announcement of proposals to close Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported on the background to the proposed closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court and consideration of a report by the Finance and Policy Committee on 28 August 2015, a copy of which was appended to the report. The report considered the impact of the changes and consultation had taken place to enable a considered response to the Ministry of Justice proposals, the outcome of which was included in the report. The Finance and Policy Committee had expressed their opposition to the closure of the Hartlepool Magistrates Court and the report would be referred to Council for consideration and debate at the meeting to be held on 17 September to allow a response to the Ministry of Justice.

The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Partnership endorsed the views of the Finance and Policy Committee and were strongly against the proposed closure of the courts in Hartlepool.

Decision

That the contents of the report, attached at Appendix 1, be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.

CHAIR

NORTH EAST JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

31 July 2015

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Chair: Councillor Ray Martin-Wells, Hartlepool Borough Council

Stockton Borough Council:
Councillor Hall

South Tyneside Council:
Councillor Brady

Northumberland County Council:
Councillors Sambrook and Nisbet

Newcastle City Council:
Councillor Mendelson

North Tyneside Council:
Councillor Brooks

Durham County Council:
Councillor Robinson

Middlesbrough Council
Councillor Dryden

Also Present: Yvonne Ormston and Paul Liversidge, North East Ambulance Service
Stephen Gwilym, Durham County Council
Peter Mennear, Stockton Borough Council
Karen Christon, Newcastle City Council
Paul Baldasera, South Tyneside Borough Council
Angela Frisby, Gateshead Borough Council
Sharon Ranade, North Tyneside Borough Council
Elise Pout, Middlesbrough Borough Council
Paul Allen, Northumberland County Council

Officers: Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager (HBC)
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services (HBC)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Kay, Redcar and Cleveland, Councillor Green, Gateshead Borough Council, Councillor Turner, Newcastle City Council, Councillor Javed Stockton Borough Council and the Member representative from Sunderland City Council.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Resignation of Vice-Chair Councillor Richards and Appointment of Replacement

In the absence of any nominations, the Chair advised that the position of Vice-Chair would remain vacant.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 February 2015

Confirmed.

5. Terms of Reference for the North East Joint Health Scrutiny Committee *(Chair of the North East Joint Health Scrutiny Committee)*

The Scrutiny Manager (HBC) sought the Committee's agreement to re-confirmation of the terms of reference and protocols for the North East Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation

That the Terms of Reference and Protocols for this Committee be re-affirmed.

6. Introduction and Performance Update *(Chief Executive, North East Ambulance Service)*

Representatives from the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) had been invited to the meeting to provide an introduction and update on performance of NEAS.

The Chief Executive from NEAS provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which included information on the current performance of the service and the measures that had recently been introduced to improve performance. The Committee was advised of the recent links that had been

established with Teesside University to address the shortage nationally of paramedics, support mechanisms in place for staff as well as the future role of the ambulance service following the Government's review of mobile treatment services. The Chief Executive was pleased to report that the North East Ambulance Service had recently achieved network vanguard status, the benefits of which were outlined.

In support of the presentation, further information was provided in a report, a copy of which was tabled at the meeting, that had been presented on ambulance A&E activity to Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee in relation to the overall current provision of emergency ambulance care services. The report included a summary of key findings, ambulance activity including response times by ambulance trust, national benchmarking data up to May 2015, patient experience information, community first responder and third party performance as well as workforce data in terms of sickness absence and vacancies.

In response to concerns raised by a Member regarding perception that Teesside was a secondary priority in terms of coverage and response, the Chief Executive, whilst acknowledging difficulties in hot spot rural areas, provided assurances that the aim was to provide a consistent high level service across the North East and highlighted that work was currently ongoing with the police and the fire services in relation to co-responding with a view to improving services in rural areas. It was highlighted that work was also ongoing with CCGs and Urgent Care Centres with a view to reducing the number of transfers to hospital where possible.

The representatives responded to a number of issues raised by Members in relation to the information provided in the report. Clarification was provided regarding the proportion of calls meeting the response times, examples of the challenges faced by the NEAS, paramedic/student training arrangements and how training provision with other emergency services could be shared and more effective. Examples of how a co-responding scheme would operate including the benefits of such a scheme was also outlined. The Chief Executive placed emphasis upon the importance of extending in-house training and work was ongoing to progress this issue.

Discussion ensued as to how the paramedic shortfall could be addressed. The Chair referred to assurances that had been given by the Ambulance Service at a recent Tees Valley Joint Committee that capacity issues would be resolved by 2014 and concerns were raised that this had subsequently been extended to 2016. The importance of retaining students in the North East with a view to actively recruiting paramedics to vacant posts was emphasised. Reference was made to the continuing heavy reliance on third party providers and the request by Members at the last meeting that the viability of student sponsorship with a tie in period, as a means of addressing the paramedic shortfall and aid staff retention be explored. Disappointment was expressed that feedback had not been received in this regard.

A query was raised regarding the current position in terms of ambulances queuing outside hospitals due to delays in hospital admissions. In response, the Committee was advised that whilst the pressures arising as a result of hospital delays had reduced, discussions and work were ongoing with hospital trusts to manage this issue.

Recommendation

- (i) That the contents of the presentation and comments of Members be noted.
- (ii) That the NEAS explore the suggestion of Members in relation to student sponsorship as detailed above, feedback from which to be reported to this Committee as soon as possible.

7. Selection of Potential Topics for Inclusion in the Committee's 2015/16 Work Programme *(Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager)*

Members consideration was requested of potential topics for inclusion into the work programme for the North East Joint Health Scrutiny Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal Year. In considering the development of a potential work programme item, the Directors of Public Health across the region and each Local Authority representative had been consulted and the potential topics that had been suggested were included in the report. In order to identify a suitable topic for investigation a PICK scoring system had been utilised, an explanation of which was attached as an Appendix to the report.

The Committee was advised to be cautious in setting an overly ambitious work programme and a maximum of one topic for the coming year was recommended to allow for flexibility in its work programme for emerging issues and referrals.

During the discussion that ensued on the potential work programme items, a number of preferences were suggested including the wider issue around GP provision as well as recruitment, encouraging people to use pharmacies for minor ailments and other services where provided as well as 7 day NHS working. Following debate, the majority of Members supported the issue of encouraging people to use pharmacies for minor ailments and other services as their chosen work programme topic for this municipal year.

In terms of taking this issue forward the Committee's approval was sought for the Scrutiny Manager, in consultation with the Chair and officer representatives to scope the investigation for consideration at the next meeting. The Chair indicated that the level of support regionally would need to be explored in order to determine the depth of the investigation.

A Member highlighted capacity issues within their organisation and the

difficulties they would encounter in providing any support.

Recommendation

- (i) That encouraging people to use pharmacies for minor ailments and other services be undertaken as the Committee's main topic for investigation during the 2015/16 municipal year.
- (ii) That authority be delegated to the Chair of this Committee together with the Scrutiny Manager (HBC) to scope the investigation for consideration at the next meeting.

8. Chairman's urgent items

None

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chair reported that the next meeting would be held on 1 October 2015 at 2.00 pm – Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

The meeting closed at 11.20 am.

CHAIR