

**AGENDA ITEM:**

**HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

**10 JUNE 2011**

**HOUSE OF COMMONS HEALTH COMMITTEE:  
INVESTIGATION INTO PUBLIC HEALTH IN ENGLAND**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To invite the Health Scrutiny Panel to consider making a submission to the House of Commons Health Committee's investigation into Public Health in England.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Panel considers whether it would like to submit evidence to the House of Commons Health Committee's investigation into Public Health in England.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

3. The Health Scrutiny Panel will be familiar will be aware that the House of Commons operates a Health Select Committee, which examines the performance and policy of the Government of the day relating to the NHS. It also considers important public health issues of the day.
4. The Health Committee has recently announced that it will be conducting a review into Public Health in England. The Health Scrutiny Panel will recall that the Government recently held a public consultation on Public Health, entitled *Healthy People, Healthy Lives*, which was closed at the end of March 2011. The Health Scrutiny Panel serving at the time, submitted a response to that consultation, which is at appendix 1.
5. On the basis of the Public Health consultation document and the proposals contained therein, the House of Commons Health Committee has announced

it will be studying the topic in detail. The Health Committee has outlined its remit and Terms of Reference, which are as follows;

*Public health is a vital, but too often neglected, aspect of the National Health Service. The current constraints on public finances make it more important than ever to limit and reduce the overall demand for NHS services by the public health goals of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health. At the same time, the aim of reducing health inequalities becomes ever more pressing as the burden of ill health falls in an increasingly disproportionate way on the poorest, as well as on other disadvantaged social groups.*

*It is also particularly important to review this topic at this time given that the Government is proposing major changes to the organisation of public health services, as part of its wider plans for reform of the NHS. These changes, which are being legislated for in the Health and Social Care Bill, were originally welcomed by those in the field but have subsequently become highly contentious. The Committee believes it is important that these plans be effectively scrutinised not least because of the importance of public health in ensuring that health services are commissioned effectively.*

*In its inquiry, the Committee will consider:*

- *the creation of Public Health England within the Department of Health;*
- *the abolition of the Health Protection Agency and the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse;*
- *the public health role of the Secretary of State;*
- *the future role of local government in public health (including arrangements for the appointment of Directors of Public Health; and the role of Health and Wellbeing Boards, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies);*
- *arrangements for public health involvement in the commissioning of NHS services;*
- *arrangements for commissioning public health services;*
- *the future of the Public Health Observatories;*
- *the structure and purpose of the Public Health Outcomes Framework;*
- *arrangements for funding public health services (including the Health Premium);*
- *the future of the public health workforce (including the regulation of public health professionals); and*  
*how the Government is responding to the Marmot Review on health inequalities.<sup>1</sup>*

6. The Health Committee has invited any individual or organisation to submit evidence to its Public Health study, through a 'call for evidence'. The Health Committee has placed a deadline for submissions of 13 June 2011. As such, the Panel is asked to consider whether it would like to submit evidence for the Health Committee to consider, pertaining to Public Health and the proposals for its development.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/health-committee/news/11-05-13-newinquiry-publichealth>

7. If the Panel would like to submit a response, it is suggested that it uses the Panel's response to the initial Public Health Consultation as its basis. It may be that the Panel would like to emphasis certain points made in its consultation response, or expand on certain matters. The Panel was keen to point out in its initial response to the Public Health Consultation, that if local government is to assume responsibility for public health, local government would benefit from clarity about the level of resource it could expect to assist it in delivering public health services. Further, that particular cognisance and weighting given to the health needs of a given area.
8. Should the Panel decide to submit evidence to the Health Select Committee, the Panel's secretariat can compile a response consistent with the wishes of the Panel. The secretariat will ensure it is submitted to meet the Health Committee's deadline.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9. Appendix 1 – Health Scrutiny Panel response to the Public Health White Paper

#### **Contact Officer:**

Jon Ord - Scrutiny Support Officer  
Telephone: 01642 729706 (direct line)  
Email: [jon\\_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:jon_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk)