

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD  
27 JUNE 2006**

**HEALTH SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2006/7**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To appraise the Overview & Scrutiny Board of the likely work programme commitments for the Health Scrutiny function of Middlesbrough Council during the year of 2006/7.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Board considers the likely work programme and following any questions and/or comments approves the current course of action.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

3. As the Overview & Scrutiny Board is aware, Middlesbrough Council has powers of scrutiny over the provision of local health services. As a result of this statutory power, Middlesbrough Council plays an integral role in three health scrutiny bodies.
4. Firstly, there is the Middlesbrough Council Health Scrutiny Panel. At its meeting on 14 June 2006 it considered potential topics for 2006/7 work programme, generated from a wide range of sources. That list included smoking cessation, hospital-acquired infections, cancer services and the Patient Journey.
5. Following consideration and discussion, the Health Scrutiny Panel has resolved to conduct further consultation relating to the potential subjects for the 2006/7 work programme, before it makes a decision. Specifically, the Panel decided to contact stakeholders outside of the immediate local health economy about its views on what subjects should be priorities and will agree its work programme as soon as those stakeholders have had an opportunity to comment.

6. Accordingly, the work programme for the Health Scrutiny Panel will be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Board as soon as possible.
7. Middlesbrough Council is also involved in the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee, which also comprises of Hartlepool Borough Council (Chair in 2006/7), Darlington Borough Council (Vice Chair in 2006/7), Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton Borough Council.
8. The Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee was very heavily involved in 2005-6 with the scrutiny review into the Acute Services proposals, which flowed from the Darzi review. That matter has run into the year 2006-7, which has had an impact on the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee's ability to meet and plan its next work programme. It is also probable that the conclusion to the Acute services proposals process will also require the attention of scrutiny in 2006/7.
9. In terms of future areas of work, it is expected that there will be further statutory consultations flowing from the local NHS which will necessitate the full and active involvement of the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee, including two on the future of urology services and neo-natal services. Until those areas and associated timeframes are confirmed by the local NHS, it is very difficult for the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee to confidently set its work programme. It is also anticipated that the Joint Committee will receive training on NHS finance matters and pay close attention to the impact of organisational changes to Ambulance Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts. It is possible that such re-organisations may also produce areas of work for the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee to get involved in.
10. Nonetheless, the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee will hold a meeting as soon as possible following the conclusion to its involvement in the Acute Services Proposals, to set in train its work for 2006/7, which promises to be a busy year.
11. The Middlesbrough & Eston Health Scrutiny Joint Committee is coming toward the end of a review into palliative & respite services for children with life limiting illnesses, a final report into which is expected shortly.
12. Following the Joint Committee's drafting, consideration and adoption of the Final Report, it will consider the matters it wishes to consider in its 2006/7 work programme. Again, it would be difficult for the Joint Committee to set a work programme until it knows whether there will be any statutory consultations flowing from the local NHS in the year ahead, which it will have to play a full part in. That information should be obtained soon. Further, it is as yet unclear as to whether there will be any service issues arising specifically from the recently approved local NHS reorganisations requiring the involvement of overview and scrutiny.

13. Once such knowledge is in possession of the Joint Committee, it will be able to set its work programme immediately and the Overview & Scrutiny Board will be advised accordingly.

**COUNCILLOR E. DRYDEN  
CHAIR, HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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