

AGENDA ITEM:

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD**

**11 JANUARY 2011**

**HEALTH SCRUTINY UPDATE**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To appraise the Overview & Scrutiny Board of the progress of the Health Scrutiny function.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Board notes the progress of the Health Scrutiny function and endorses the proposed actions of the Health Scrutiny Panel.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

3. The Health Scrutiny Panel has recently completed a final report into End of Life Care in Middlesbrough, which is elsewhere on the agenda today. This has been a lengthy piece of work for the Panel, which makes a number of significant points about the development required in End of Life Care in Middlesbrough. Following consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Board, the report will be submitted to the Executive and local NHS for formal responses to the report. The Panel has now moved on to considering how the local NHS responds to the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults. Connected to this point, the Panel has proposed that a joint group, made up of Councillors from the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel consider the recent developments around the Mental Capacity Act. This will ensure that Elected Members can have a better understanding of how this impacts upon the delivery of Social and Health care. It is proposed to take this matter up swiftly if the Overview & Scrutiny Board is in agreement.
4. The Health Scrutiny Panel, at a recent meeting, also received a request to consider the topic of whether Children's Centres are being told, with sufficient regularity and consistency, of the new births in their areas of responsibility, which can then impact on the uptake of services for some children. The Panel agreed with that it was an important topic and expressed a strong interest in considering the matter fairly swiftly. The Panel was scheduled to consider the matter at a meeting on 7 January 2011.

5. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Board may also be aware that the Department of Health has recently published its response to the consultation process around the *Equity & Excellence* White Paper<sup>1</sup>. The OSB may recall that the original White Paper suggested that Health & Wellbeing Boards should inherit the statutory health scrutiny power, from the scrutiny function. That proposals has now been dropped, with the Department of Health reporting that its consultation highlighted that this would be an incompatible mixture of executive and scrutiny powers. The document produced by the Department of Health is a substantial one, with many other significant statements of intent. It is expected that a briefing paper on the document will be presented to the Health Scrutiny Panel soon.
6. The Regional Health Scrutiny project, focussing upon the health of, and health services for, the ex-service community has now completed its evidence gathering and has a draft final report. That report will now be considered and finalised for publication at a meeting on 14 January 2011.
7. The Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee continues with its work programme and is scheduled to meet on 17 January 2011 to further consider the capacity of Mental Health services across Tees, amongst other areas.
8. The South Tees Health Scrutiny Joint Committee is scheduled to meet on 19 January 2011, to consider the progress of the Transforming Community Services agenda.
9. The Health Scrutiny Panel is also continuing to monitor the national policy picture with relation to the White Paper and the subsequent steps to implement its proposals in Middlesbrough. The Health Scrutiny Panel held its first such meeting on 15 December 2010 and will keep the Overview & Scrutiny Board apprised of any developments in this field.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10. No background papers were used in the production of this report.

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**Chair, Health Scrutiny Panel**

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<sup>1</sup> It is entitled *Liberating the NHS: Legislative framework and next steps*.