

**AFS/03/10**

**Forum** SOUTH ESSEX AREA

**Date** 17 March 2010

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**HEALTH SCRUTINY**

**Report by;** David Moses, Head of Member Support and Governance

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**1. Purpose of the Item**

To receive the attached report in respect of the decision of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee to devolve its responsibilities for scrutinising local health issues to each of the Area Forums.

## **Health Scrutiny Items**

At its meeting on 19 January the Forum considered draft protocols developed by the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) in respect of the decision to devolve its responsibilities for scrutinising local health issues to each of the Area Forums. This paper has now been adopted and the purpose of this paper is to enable Members to consider:

- Two requests from HOSC to undertake scrutiny reviews
- Other health related issues which the Forum would like to be reviewed, either locally or by HOSC as part of a wider review

## **Scrutinising the NHS South East Essex Strategy**

HOSC held a workshop on 03 February 2010 to help it develop an ongoing health scrutiny work programme. Arising from this was a number of potential work streams which were given further consideration by HOSC at its latest meeting on 03 March 2010.

Four particular issues arose during a consideration of the NHS South East Essex Strategy:

- The productivity drive
- Mental health pressures and spend
- Health prevention
- Provision of community premises

HOSC concluded that this would be best reviewed by a joint group formed from the South Area Forum and Southend Unitary Authority. Should the Forum accept this request an approach would then be made to the Southend HOSC to establish a joint task and finish group in a similar manner to the approach adopted last year for the Cancer Review.

It is suggested that this Forum take the lead in establishing the proposed task and finish group.

## **Access to GPs**

The HOSC workshop also covered a number of issues associated with access to GP services, some of which are already under review through a Mid-Essex Forum task and finish group looking at the equality of access to health services.

The discussions also included the problems with GP services in Rochford and Basildon, the lack of investment in new premises, the number of single GP surgeries etc., as raised at the last meeting of this Forum. There are similar issues in Brentwood, which led HOSC to conclude that this may be best handled by small group drawn from the South & West Forum areas and Thurrock as these areas fall within the boundaries of NHS South East and South West.

To help spread the work load across the two Area Co-ordinators it is suggested that the West Area Forum take the lead on this work stream, with this Forum providing a couple of representatives to sit on the task 7 finish group.

### **Other health related issues**

HOSC also agreed to establish the following county-wide work streams:

- Moving health Care closer to Home
- Preparing for the Dementia Explosion
- Perfecting Health & Wellbeing Partnerships

It also agreed to defer a start on the following work streams;

- Closing the Life Expectancy Gap - a potential pilot review by the East Area Forum which has been put on hold pending the release of an associated Audit Commission report
- NHS Post Credit Crunch - deferred until after the post-general election budget

The Forum is also invited to suggest other health related issues for scrutiny reviews; however they will need to be prioritised against the above work streams.