
NEW HEALTH AUTHORITY FOR ESSEX - CONSULTATION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report seeks views on the proposed formation of a strategic health authority for Essex. The Council has been consulted by the NHS Eastern Regional Office.

2 CHANGES IN THE NHS

- 2.1 The NHS Plan sets out a long term programme for reform and performance improvement in the NHS. The stated intention is to empower front line staff, patients and local communities.
- 2.2 The process for modernising and reshaping the NHS structure has been termed “shifting the balance of power”, and will involve:-
- developing Primary Care Trusts to fulfil their potential and take on increased responsibilities,
 - creating fewer, larger and more strategic health authorities,
 - re-focussing the Department of Health on doing those things which only it can do.
- 2.3 Primary Care Trusts (PCT) will become the lead NHS organisation in assessing need, planning and securing all health services and health improvement. PCTs will provide most community services and lead on the development of all primary care services, and partnerships with local communities.
- 2.4 Strategic Health Authorities will have several primary responsibilities:
- (a) Creating a coherent strategic framework across the full range of NHS organisations, in consultation with local stakeholders. They will develop and support delivery of strategies for capital investment, information management and development of the workforce.
 - (b) Performance management of local NHS Trusts and PCTs, both of which will be accountable to the strategic health authority.
 - (c) Supporting improvement by working with local PCTs and NHS Trusts to enhance the involvement of patients, the public and

health and social care professions in developing services. Strategic health authorities will also support the development of clinical governance programmes to improve the quality and consistency of care.

- 2.5 The Department of Health will focus on supporting the delivery of the NHS Plan. Regional NHS offices will be abolished and four new Regional Directors of Health and Social Care will oversee the development of the NHS and provide the link between NHS organisations and the Department of Health.

3 PROPOSALS FOR ESSEX

- 3.1 Under the proposals, the current North Essex and South Essex Health Authorities would be replaced by a single strategic health authority for Essex.
- 3.2 The NHS Eastern Regional office has invited the Council to comment on the proposal. Responses must be made by 30 November.
- 3.3 Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Members' Rooms.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The reorganisation of the management arrangements within the NHS is moving at a rapid pace. PCTs are clearly going to be the local focus for planning and commissioning health services and the improvement of health in the area.
- 4.2 The new strategic health authorities will provide a supporting and monitoring role for PCTs and NHS Trusts and will, therefore, be less visible to patients.
- 4.3 Members may be interested to note that within the current NHS Eastern Region, the proposals are to form two other strategic health authorities in addition to Essex. These will cover Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the NHS Regional Office be advised that the Council supports the formation of a strategic health authority for Essex. (HHHCC)

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Background Papers:

Modernising the NHS: Shifting the Balance of Power in Eastern Region,
September 2001.

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