

NHS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STUDIES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To invite Members to consider the topics that have been suggested as future NHS Scrutiny studies in Essex.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that a new power of Unitary and upper tier local authorities is to carry out scrutiny of NHS services. In Essex a Partnership Forum has been formed to help ensure that second tier Councils are included in the process.
- 2.2 This is a subject that would normally be considered initially by Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the County Member from this District who is on the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor R Pearson, attending. However, the new NHS Scrutiny power formally comes into being on 1 January, and Districts have recently been asked for comments on two proposed studies which have been suggested for the period January-July 2003. The programme for this first six month period will be considered at the Partnership Forum on 10 January and responses have been requested before then.

3 SCRUTINY STUDY PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Two possible studies have been proposed:
- Patient transport – the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt this could easily be a partnership project involving Southend and Thurrock as well, but would wish to proceed on an Essex basis if they do not wish to participate.
 - Access to health services for children – this could link with a wider study of children's services to be launched in 2003 by the Children's Services Policy Development Group of the County Council. If undertaken, this is likely to be a large and complex scrutiny study and the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee have said that a clearer view of the resources available to undertake it will be needed before any final decision is taken.

4 OVERALL SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The current proposals only relate to the next six months. County intend to consult more extensively in the early Spring about the longer term scrutiny programme.

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- 4.2 A pilot scrutiny study into delayed discharges from acute hospitals in Essex has now been completed and copies have been placed in the Members' Rooms. The outcomes are to be made public on 14 January 2003.
- 4.3 County Councillor R Pearson is being invited to attend a future Community Overview and Scrutiny meeting to discuss this pilot report and initial views on the programme for future health scrutiny studies.

5 RECOMMENDATION

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

That a health scrutiny study of patient transport in Essex be supported.
(HHHCC)

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Background Papers:

None

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