

## ***Report to Council***

***Date of meeting: 20 April 2010***

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council – April 2010**

**Chairman: Councillor R Morgan**



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### **Recommendation:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from February 2010 to the present be noted.**

### **Report.**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 4 March 2010.**

1. At the March meeting, the Committee received a presentation on the North East London Health Consultation Document from Helen Brown, the Programme Director for North East London who spoke at length about their plans. There were also representatives from associated organisations attending the meeting so that they could put their point of view on the consultation document. To put the West Essex PCT's point of view we had Kirsty Boettcher and Kate Turner; Margaret Fitch from Essex Link was also in attendance; and so was County Councillor Chris Pond, the County representative on the London Joint Health Scrutiny Committee; and finally we also had our representative on the North East London consultation process, Councillor Brian Sandler.

2. The Committee and other members present were not impressed with all the plans laid before them. They were concerned to ensure that the finances for the changes were not wasted and that the clinical staff, from all the hospitals concerned, were happy with the proposed outcomes, they, after all, would be the ones tasked with the front line operation of the new systems. The Committee were also not convinced that the financial implications of the changes had been fully considered in the light of the current financial uncertainties.

3. The Committee also raised concerns about the travel time that the consultation document claimed, these were disputed. Also, there were concerns raised about what actual service provisions were going to what hospital, this seemed unclear in the document. The fact that Mental Health services were not mentioned in the document was also of some concern.

4. The Committee noted that the consultation deadline had been extended by two weeks, to 22 March and decided that after the very full and frank discussion that officers would produce a corporate response based on the discussion had that night. This reply was published in the Members Bulletin on 26 March 2010.

5. A great deal of concern was expressed that although an effective roadshow had been held in Loughton there had been no attempt at engaging with the public in Debden, Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill, arguably some of the areas most affected by the proposed changes. Helen Brown apologised and promised to urgently address this issue, perhaps through local

GP's.

6. The Committee also received a second presentation from Alison Cowie; this was an update on Health Inequalities in the district. She shared figures on life expectancy for the population and areas of deprivation and how lifestyles and access to public services impacted inequalities. Unfortunately she brought little information that was new to members although she did note that life expectancy as an indication of deprivation did not hold true in one part of Debden although the reason for this was unexplained at present.

7. The committee then reviewed the latest Cabinet forward plan which they found to be much improved and noted that it was a working document and would be updated as warranted.

8. Lastly they looked at the O&S draft annual report and went through their work programme. On considering the Cabinet agenda for the March meeting, Councillor Mrs Wagland raised concerns about the report on the Essex Children's Trust and how a number of organisations could work together, the need to share best practice and keep control of finances.