

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ROUND-UP

Summary

1. To receive a round-up of information on:
 - County Council activities in relation to health;
 - District Council activities in relation to health;
 - NHS Board Meetings;
 - Consultations in Worcestershire;
 - Urgent health issues in Worcestershire; and
 - Items for future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

Background

2. In order to ensure that Members of the Scrutiny Committee are fully informed about issues relating to health scrutiny in Worcestershire, communication will be essential. To assist in this, an item will be placed on the agenda for each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to consider consultations, County Council activities, District Council activities, urgent health issues arising in Worcestershire and future agenda items. Regard for the Council's statutory requirements in relation to access to information will be critical.

County Council Activities in Relation to Health

3. A range of County Council services can impact upon and also be impacted upon by health services. Recognising that the health-related work of the County Council will be of interest to the District Councillors on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an oral update on such activities, and on other matters the Chairman has been involved in, will be provided at each meeting by the Committee Chairman at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

District Council Activities in Relation to Health

4. The statutory power of health scrutiny, including the power to require an officer of a local NHS body to attend before the Council, rests with the County Council. However, it is recognised that a number of District Councils within Worcestershire are undertaking work in relation to local health issues, under their duty to promote the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area.
5. Recognising that the work of the District Councils will be of value and interest to the wider Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an oral update will be provided on such activities by District Councillors at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

NHS Board Meetings

6. To help the Scrutiny Committee Members to keep up-to-date and maintain their knowledge of health issues around the County, it was agreed that a 'Lead Member' would be identified for each of the local NHS bodies to attend their Board Meetings and then provide an oral update at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Consultations in Worcestershire

7. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a duty to respond to local Health Trusts' consultations on any proposed substantial changes to local health services. An oral update will

Urgent Health Issues in Worcestershire

be provided at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on both developments relating to consultations previously undertaken and forthcoming consultations.

8. Worcestershire County Council's constitution makes provision for urgent items to be considered. Standing Order 12.2 specifies that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee "may bring before the meeting and cause to be considered an item of business not specified in the summons or agenda where the Chairman is of the opinion, by reason of special circumstances (which shall be specified in the minutes) that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency".

9. Additionally, Standing Order 9.4.2 allows for the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee at any time to call a special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Standing Order 9.4.3 allows for at least one quarter of the members of the Scrutiny Committee to requisition a special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Such a requisition must be in writing, be signed by each of the Councillors concerned, identify the business to be considered and be delivered to the Director of Resources. In accordance with Access to Information Rules, the Council must give five clear days' notice of any meeting.

Items for Future Meetings

10. It is necessary that the Scrutiny Committee's ability to react to emerging health issues in a timely manner and the public's expectation of this is balanced against Worcestershire County Council's statutory duty to ensure that meetings and issues to be considered are open and transparent and meet legislative requirements. This agenda item must not be used to raise non-urgent issues. Any such issues should be raised with Democratic Services Unit at least two weeks in advance of a scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Worcestershire County Council Procedural Standing Orders and Access to Information Rules, September 2012