

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2003 AT 10.30 AM

**REPORT OF THE ADULT CARE AND HEALTH
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
12 JUNE 2003

NOTE: A copy of the report mentioned below has been sent to all members of the Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee and other members who have requested it. Further copies are available from Jill Weddle, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Telephone: 01992 555565)

**'INVESTING IN YOUR HEALTH' - CONSULTATION PAPER
BEDFORDSHIRE AND HERTFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC HEALTH
AUTHORITY (SHA)**

1. Background

The Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee have a statutory power to scrutinise the operation and performance of health services in Hertfordshire, including the responsibility for responding to consultations on behalf of the County Council. The Committee also have the power to refer to the Secretary of State when they consider that changes to health services will not best meet the needs of Hertfordshire residents.

2. Information

The Committee has considered the SHA's Consultation document 'Investing in Your Health' which describes the future vision of health care services across the area of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA. The consultation document lays out the implications of this vision for major hospital services with two options for how and where major hospital services are provided.

The Committee chose to undertake a large-scale scrutiny exercise in pursuit of its statutory responsibilities in responding to the consultation document. The proposals represent a wholesale change in the organisation and approach to health care provision in Hertfordshire, and will have far reaching implications for users and providers alike.

On 21 May the Committee heard the views of local residents, representatives of voluntary and local groups, Community Health Councils, and a wide range of health experts. The Committee were

also able to hear from, and question, those involved in the strategic and financial planning of the proposals. Planning and transportation professionals from county and district councils also gave their perspective of the issues. A complete catalogue of written representations considered as part of this process are available for inspection in the Members' room.

The Committee focussed on the implications of the proposals for all the people in the county rather than a specific analysis of the two options for the configuration of major hospital sites. The themes which particularly emerged from the document were:

- the need for change
- flexibility and responsiveness
- ease of access
- quality
- emergency care
- cancer treatment
- maternity and paediatric services
- resources
 - there is a significant problem of recruitment and retention at what seems to be all levels of staff
 - how to finance the proposals to turn the vision into reality
- deliverability
- communications

3. Scrutiny of the Proposals

The Committee were very supportive of the overall vision for improved health services in Hertfordshire and commended the SHA's commitment to making them happen. The Committee also felt that there were areas where it could help make the proposals a reality and offered a joint approach to improve recruitment, retention and transport issues. The Committee agreed to establish a Topic Group which would work with the Health Authority to monitor progress, with the following remit:

- to explore ways that evaluation can be made of the changes to the whole health economy in Hertfordshire not just individual services.
- to discuss and agree the nature and content of monitoring information which will enable the SHA and the committee to evaluate progress
- to agree a programme of monitoring – this may include regular reports on activity, finances and outcomes and/or briefings/visits for the committee.
- to consider other ways that members of the Committee could helpfully engage in monitoring progress – eg., attendance at meetings and engagement with stakeholders.

There was overwhelming support for the vision as set out in 'Investing in your Health'. However, the Committee recommended that the final

response submitted to the SHA should further amplify the following issues:

- i. A more specific commitment to transport
- ii. At the appropriate time, details of locations for Diagnostic Treatment Centres, for instance, would be required.
- iii. Interim arrangements
- iv. Mental health services

Many people working in the health service are now going to have to make substantial changes to the way they work. The challenges will be immense and will require strong leadership, determination and goodwill. This will involve working closely with, and getting support from a wide range of partners. The Committee will seek to work towards the vision and look forward in due course to reviewing the SHA's final decision on the option they decide to pursue.

For further information a copy of the full consultation document 'Investing in your health', the consultation summary document and the scrutiny report are all available from Committee Services, Room 222, County Hall.

Roma Mills
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12 June 2003