

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR HEALTH ISSUES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>14 JUNE 2010</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Solicitor to the Council**

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### **SCRUTINY OF PROPOSALS FOR NEONATAL SERVICES – JOINT COMMITTEE**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To consider whether the Commission wishes to appoint any members to a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee to examine proposals for neonatal services for Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Peterborough.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Commission considers whether to appoint up to three members to a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The East of England Specialised Commissioning Group is reviewing the provision of neonatal services (i.e. services for newborn babies who need additional or intensive care) for the sub-region covering Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Peterborough.
- 3.2 The proposals will include the number and location of units covering different levels of need. Issues will include the capacity and quality of the service, and the implications of the location of the units for how far babies and carers have to travel.
- 3.3 A Direction from the Department of Health requires that when a local NHS body is required to consult more than one overview and scrutiny committee on any proposal for a substantial development of the health service, the local authorities concerned must appoint a joint committee. Only the joint committee may send the scrutiny response to the consultation. The local authorities' health scrutiny committees may not respond individually.
- 3.4 In view of this, the East of England Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs' Forum, which brings together health scrutiny chairs from across the region, is proposing that the four authorities affected, namely Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Peterborough set up a time-limited joint committee to consider and respond to the proposals for neonatal services.
- 3.5 The detailed terms of reference and work programme for the committee would be agreed by its members. It is likely to have three or four formal meetings during the consultation period; the location and timing of these meetings will be determined once the consultation dates are known. The Committee would meet in public and its papers would be publicly available.
- 3.6 Norfolk County Council has agreed to host the joint committee and therefore meetings are likely to be held in Norwich.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The East of England Specialised Commissioning Group will be consulting on proposals for the provision of neonatal services for the sub-region covering Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Peterborough. Department of Health regulations require that the scrutiny response must be made by a joint committee of the authorities concerned.

4.2 A joint health scrutiny committee is being set up, supported by Norfolk County Council. Each authority is being invited to appoint up to three members and two substitutes to the Committee.

**5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1 None