

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **28 January 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Fit for the Future – PCTs’ decision and response to HOSC recommendations**

Purpose of report: **To inform HOSC of the decision made by East Sussex Downs and Weald and Hastings and Rother Primary Care Trusts’ (the PCTs’) on their Fit for the Future proposals. To consider the PCTs’ response to HOSC’s recommendations of October 2007.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended to:

- 1. Note the decision made by the PCTs in relation to the Fit for the Future proposals.**
 - 2. Consider the PCTs’ response to HOSC’s recommendations of October 2007, particularly those relating to the overall configuration of services.**
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1. Background

1.1 In November 2007, HOSC noted the latest developments in the process being undertaken by the East Sussex PCTs in relation to their ‘Fit for the Future’ proposals. These developments followed on from the close of public consultation in July 2007 and the submission of HOSC’s initial report to the PCTs in October 2007.

1.2 At the time of HOSC’s meeting on 30th November 2007, the PCTs were in the process of undertaking further work to clarify and assess the potential additional options put forward by a range of stakeholders in response to the consultation process. The intention was for the PCTs to be in a position to make a decision towards the end of the year.

2. East Sussex PCTs’ decision

2.1 On the morning of 20th December 2007 the PCT boards held a joint decision-making meeting in Uckfield. The boards received a report from the Chief Executive of the PCTs which described the consultation process, highlighted a range of issues for the boards to consider when coming to their decision and made recommendations as to the future configuration of services. This report is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 At the meeting the PCT boards voted to reconfigure the services in line with the recommendations in the Chief Executive’s report – i.e. to establish a single consultant-led maternity unit, special care baby unit and inpatient gynaecology service at the Conquest Hospital in Hastings, together with a midwife-led unit at Eastbourne District General Hospital, subject to the conditions outlined in the report. The boards also voted to strengthen ante and post natal care, specifically the development of further community outreach services. The draft minutes of the joint PCT board meeting are attached at appendix 2.

2.3 The PCTs’ decision was subsequently ratified by the Strategic Health Authority board which met on the afternoon of the 20th December at the Authority’s offices in Horley, Surrey.

3. East Sussex PCTs' response to HOSC recommendations

3.1 In its report of October 2007 (available from www.eastsussexhealth.org), HOSC made 24 recommendations to the PCTs, based on evidence obtained at HOSC meetings from May to September 2007. The majority of these recommendations (R4 – R24) concerned issues HOSC decided the PCTs should take into account when considering implementing the various potential configurations of services.

3.2 In its report, HOSC did not endorse any particular overall configuration of services. HOSC considered that it was not possible to determine whether a single site option was the best configuration for consultant-led obstetric, special baby care and inpatient gynaecology services in the absence of a full assessment of alternative staffing models. HOSC therefore recommended that the PCTs undertake a full assessment of the additional proposals put forward through the New Options Assessment Panel before making a decision. HOSC also recommended that other locations and models for midwife-led care (beyond those identified in the PCTs original options) should be investigated.

3.3 Related to these recommendations about further assessment of options, HOSC also recommended that the PCTs should discuss with HOSC an appropriate level of further engagement with the public on any additional options which they consider to be viable.

3.4 At their meeting on 20th December 2007 the PCT Boards agreed their response to HOSC's recommendations. Their full response is attached at appendix 3. In summary, the PCTs agreed to accept all 24 of HOSC's recommendations.

3.5 The three recommendations outlined in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 above - further assessment of alternative options, exploration of midwife-led care models and further consultation (R1 – R3) - were expected to be actioned by the PCTs prior to their boards making a decision. HOSC will therefore want to consider whether these recommendations have been adequately implemented by the PCTs. To assist with this, papers outlining the evaluation of alternative models have been provided by the PCTs and these are attached at appendix 4. There will be an opportunity for HOSC to consider the perspective of the proposers of alternative options under item 6 on this agenda.

3.6 Should the PCTs' decision on the configuration of services proceed to implementation stage, HOSC will wish to consider at that time how it will check that the remaining recommendations are being actioned satisfactorily by the PCTs.

ANDREW OGDEN
Director of Law and Personnel
Contact Officer: Claire Lee Tel No: 01273 481327