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To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 23 July 2010

Subject: Item 5. Intended Outcomes: Diagnostics – Waiting Times.

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## **1. Background**

(1) In previous discussions that the Committee has had about different ways to restructure and refocus the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one of the recurring themes has been that the Committee's meetings should be more focused on the outcomes it would like to achieve. Another has been the need to make the work of the Committee more accessible to members of the public.

(2) This paper is intended to be a way to progress towards achieving these twin aims. Two sets of questions are set out below, both of which the meeting will look to having answered by the end of the meeting: the strategic questions, of particular interest to members of the public, and the more detailed questions. The detailed questions have been sent to the attendees in advance of the meeting.

(3) Please note that it is the intention that cancer services will be considered at a future meeting, and this meeting will focus on the key diagnostic tests covered under imaging, physiological assessments and endoscopies.

## **2. Hierarchy of Questions**

### **(1). Strategic Question**

- (1) How successful is the NHS in Kent at ensuring people receive the appropriate diagnostic tests in a timely fashion?

### **(2). Detailed Questions**

- (1) How many people resident in your PCT area undergo the key diagnostic tests each year and what information can you provide about waiting times over the last two years?
- (2) How many people have their diagnostic tests carried out in a) acute hospitals b) community and primary care settings? Do the waiting times differ depending on setting?
- (3) How much is spent on diagnostics?
- (4) What role does patient choice play in choosing where and when to have a diagnostic test?
- (5) Are there any areas of weakness in delivering diagnostic tests which have been identified and what measures have been put in place to improve the situation?

- (6) Is there any relevant PALs data you can provide regarding diagnostic tests in your health economy?
- (7) In general, what changes have there been to how and where diagnostic tests are carried out in recent years?
- (8) What plans have been, or are being made, to modernise pathology services across Kent?
- (9) How are test results communicated to a patient's GP, how long does this normally take, and are there any specific challenges in this area?
- (10) Specifically on the topic of audiology, how long are waiting times for replacement hearing aids, and does the length of time for an appointment depend on whether a full test is required?
- (11) Can you please outline how paediatric audiology assessment services are organised in your health economy, and whether there any changes being planned or undertaken?

### **3. Recommendations**

- (a) The Committee is asked to assess whether the outcomes in section 2 above have been achieved or if further information on this topic is required by the Committee.