

## **Item 6**

By: Godfrey Horne MBE - Chairman

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 September 2010

Subject: Women's and Children's Services at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust: Update.

---

### **Summary**

This report sets out for the Committees information the ongoing events/dialogue on the implementation of the Women's and Children's Services within the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.

---

### **1. Introduction**

(1) This report sets out for the Committee's information the ongoing stakeholder events being conducted by the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority as commissioned by the Secretary of State for Health Andrew Lansley CBE in which he has asked for a report to be presented to him by the end of September 2010 having engaged with stakeholders again on the ten issues of referral made by the Committee which are subject to local assessment and resolution.

(2) Mr Lansley's letter made it clear that this further assessment and report should not prejudice the work to open the Pembury Hospital as planned, nor the current work in establishing services there.

(3) However, the Committee will note that Mr Lansley's letter was silent about the provision of Women's and Children's Services at Maidstone Hospital. There remains considerable objection from the public of Maidstone and the surrounding area on the Women's and Children's services which will remain at Maidstone Hospital.

(4) Members of the Committee will be aware of the ongoing stakeholder events at which Members of the Committee (if they have been able to do so during the holiday period) have been invited to attend as observers (see Appendix 1). These stakeholder events will culminate in a meeting of a Co-Design Group" with stakeholders taking place at the Hop Farm, Beltring on 22 September at which Members of this Committee will be invited to observe.

### **2. Progress since the last Meeting of the Committee – 23 July 2010**

(1) The Committee will recall that at the conclusion of the Committees last meeting it was agreed that I should send a further letter to the Secretary of State for Health following consultation on its content with Members of the Committee.

(2) After discussions with the spokesmen the attached letter was sent to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Committee (see Appendix 2).

## Item 6

(3) It will be recalled that one of the ten issues of referral made by the Committee related to "Transport" and in particular the highway infrastructure particularly the A228 connecting Maidstone and Pembury and the dualling of the A21 from Tonbridge to Pembury. I have written to the Highways Agency and the Cabinet Member for the County Council Mr N Chard about these issues. Attached for the Committee's information are the letters I have received to date (see Appendix 3).

(4) Elected Members from both the County Council and Maidstone Borough Council are organising a public meeting on the provision of Women's and Children's Services at Maidstone Hospital at the Maidstone Leisure Centre on Thursday 9 September at 7.15pm.

### 3. New Criteria

The Committee are reminded that in his response to the Committee's referral the Secretary of State for Health indicated that he wanted the reconfiguration of Women's and Children's Services for the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust to reflect these new criteria for reconfiguration proposals:

- a. support from GP commissioners;
- b. strengthened public and patient engagement;
- c. clarity on the clinical evidence base; and
- d. consistency with current and prospective patient choice.

### 4. Next Steps

(1) I am aware that through the stakeholder events, e-mail correspondence, the press and the media new issues are arising relating to the new criteria the Secretary of State has asked should be addressed in implementing these reconfiguration proposals.

(2) I am therefore proposing that an additional meeting of this Committee is held on Monday 20 September to consider what, if any, comments it wishes to make to the Secretary of State for Health for inclusion in the report he has asked to be prepared by the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority.

### 5. Recommendations:

The Committee are asked to receive the report and note the additional meeting of the Committee on Monday, 20 September 2010.

Paul Wickenden,  
Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager.