

Item 5: Proposal to establish informal HOSC liaison groups

By: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 April 2011

Subject: Proposal to establish informal HOSC liaison groups

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## **1. Background.**

- (a) At the previous meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee members discussed the proposal of establishing informal HOSC liaison groups as one possible way of realising the twin challenge of deepening Members' understanding of health services in Kent and improving the process of prioritisation.
- (b) The general principles behind the idea of establishing informal groups were generally approved by the majority of Members of the Committee. A number of potential issues were raised as to how these would work with locality boards, Borough and District Councils as well as Town and Parish Councils and the developing GP commissioning consortia. More broadly the point was made that with so much change going on the health economy, there was a danger in establishing structures which would soon need to be changed.
- (c) With these issues in mind, the Chairman undertook to present a revised paper at the subsequent meeting of the Committee.
- (d) Given the situation of ongoing change, it may be that a more ad hoc arrangement will be more appropriate in the first instance. For example, where a Member wished to lead an informal liaison group with any of the main provider Trusts listed below, possibly with the intention of produce a response to the Trust's Quality Account, this could be done without any requirement for all Trusts to be covered, or for a formal reporting mechanism to be out in place. There may also be specific issues which will arise, possibly involving more than one Trust, where a small group of Members may wish to take a lead for a time-limited piece of work such as a Task and Finish Group Report.
- (e) Main provider Trusts:
  - Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
  - East Kent Hospitals NHS University Foundation Trust
  - Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust
  - Kent Community Health NHS Trust
  - Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
  - Medway NHS Foundation Trust
  - South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

## **2. Recommendations**

Members of the Committee are asked to delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Spokespersons, to establish informal HOSC Liaison Groups where a Member of the Committee wishes to lead one, or establish a time-limited Task and Finish Group where this is the more appropriate way of dealing with a specific issue.