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**Meeting:** Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 13 September 2010

**Subject:** Urgent Care Strategy – proposed NHS Consultation

**Report of:**

**Summary:** NHS Bedfordshire and Horizon Healthcare have been developing an Urgent Care Strategy to respond to the changing demand for urgent care facilities in the Borough. The aim is to reduce hospital admissions, reduced delayed hospital discharge, reduce the number of readmissions within 30 days and increase preventative care. NHS Bedfordshire is now moving towards launching the public consultation for this strategy.

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Contact Officer: Cheryl Powell, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

The involvement of the Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee in this proposed consultation will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities.

**Financial:**

n/a

**Legal:**

n/a

**Risk Management:**

n/a

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

n/a

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

n/a

**Community Safety:**

n/a

**Sustainability:**

## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. **that the Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee**
  - (a) **considers whether this strategy requires a full public consultation, or that the alternative approach set out by NHS Bedfordshire at the Committee's meeting involving extensive local engagement of stakeholders would be sufficient;**
  - (b) **consider, subject to 1. (a) above, whether it should be consulted about the Urgent Care Strategy during the public consultation process; and**
  - (c) **notes that, subject to 1. (b) above, if Bedford Borough Council's Adult Social Care and Health Policy Review and Development Committee also considers that it should to be consulted on the Urgent Care Strategy, a joint Health Scrutiny Committee will be required.**

## **Inclusion in the consultation process**

1. The Committee previously considered the strategy at its meeting of 30 April 2009. A copy of the minute extract is enclosed at Appendix 2.
2. On this occasion, the Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to be consulted about this proposal under Section 7 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001. Section 7 requires NHS bodies to consult the relevant Health Scrutiny committees in all local authority areas affected as to whether a formal consultation is required. The Committee has already considered and made comments on the consultation process (see Minutes, 30 April), and now should consider whether it wishes to be involved in that consultation process.
3. If the Committee chooses to be consulted, then it has the power of referral to the Secretary of State about the consultation.

## **Powers of referral.**

4. At the conclusion of a consultation, the relevant Health Scrutiny Committee or Joint Health Scrutiny Committee has a power to refer any serious concerns to the Secretary of State for Health. There are two grounds for referral:
  - i. that the consultation with patients and public has been inadequate; or
  - ii. that the proposals are not in the interests of the local health service in the area, and would have a detrimental effect on the health and experience of local patients.

5. Both referrals would need clear evidence for such a conclusion, and should only be used as a last resort.

### **Joint Health Scrutiny Committees**

6. It should be noted that, where a proposed substantial variation or development of services covers more than one local authority area, and the relevant Health Scrutiny Committees wish to take part in the consultation, then they are required under the Act and by Secretary of State's Direction to form a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. The Councils cannot be consulted formally on an individual basis and would not have any powers of referral.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – NHS BEDFORDSHIRE BRIEFING NOTE: Improving urgent care services in North Bedfordshire and parts of Central Bedfordshire

Appendix B – Minutes of the Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Thursday, 30 April 2009

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

None

**Location of papers:** Priory House, Chicksands