



**Health Scrutiny in East Sussex Newsletter No. 20**

**May 2008**

*This newsletter is produced by East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and provides an update on the progress made with Health Scrutiny in East Sussex.*

## ***SPECIAL EDITION***

# **Weighing up the Future**



An independent panel will weigh up NHS proposals to change maternity services in Eastbourne and Hastings, following a decision by Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Health.

HOSC has welcomed his announcement that the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) will carry out a full review of the proposals and investigate the concerns raised by the Committee when it referred the matter to the Secretary of State earlier this year.

Cllr Sylvia Tidy, HOSC Chairman, said: "Local mothers-to-be deserve the very best in maternity services. The IRP can help us ensure this happens. Their job, as independent experts, is to weigh up the pros and cons of these proposals and give informed advice to the Secretary of State as to how maternity services in Eastbourne and Hastings should be configured. HOSC will work closely with the IRP panellists to ensure a full and thorough review takes place."

East Sussex Downs and Weald and Hastings and Rother Primary Care Trusts are making the case for one consultant-led maternity service at Hastings and a midwife-led birthing centre at Eastbourne.

Over the next month, the IRP will discuss the issues with a wide range of stakeholders – from obstetricians and midwives to local campaigners, NHS bosses and HOSC members. It will also consider additional submitted evidence, such as the business case behind the proposals as put forward by the county's Primary Care Trusts, and HOSC's findings following its scrutiny of the 'Fit for the Future' plans.

The review will draw to a close in mid-June. After that, the IRP will make recommendations to the Secretary of State who is expected to announce his decision in the autumn.

The Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) advises the Secretary of State for Health on contested proposals for health service change in England. It is an independent, advisory, non departmental public body and is independent of politicians and the NHS. It is made up of experienced clinicians, managers, and lay members who have wide-ranging expertise in clinical healthcare and NHS management, involving the public and patients.

## Would you like to comment to the IRP?

If you have fresh information on the East Sussex NHS proposals for maternity services which you would like to be considered by the Independent Reconfiguration Panel, contact the IRP by telephone on 020 7389 8047, or email [irpinfo@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:irpinfo@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

IRP website: [www.irpanel.org.uk](http://www.irpanel.org.uk)

## Chosen service model in West Sussex – A&E departments to remain at all three hospitals



The service model proposed by clinicians and backed by Sir Graeme Catto, which would keep A&E services in all three hospitals (St Richards Hospital, Princess Royal Hospital and Worthing Hospital), has been approved by West Sussex PCT Board.

The chosen model three, which would see one major general hospital and two local general hospitals in West Sussex, did not feature in the original proposals and was designed by clinicians during the consultation period last year. It received overwhelming support and has also been endorsed by the Joint HOSC.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy said, 'The Joint HOSC felt that this was the only option which might meet the needs of health services in West Sussex and surrounding areas. We are pleased

the PCTs have taken on board the committee's recommendations which were published in the committee's May report.'

John Wilderspin, Chief Executive of West Sussex PCT said 'The model has the support of the local NHS and has been designed with the public's views in mind. It will ensure that the majority of people can still go to their local A&E apart from those needing really specialist care who will be better supported in a hospital with more specialist services.'

Sir Graeme Catto, President of the General Medical Council and Independent Chair of the Options Assessment Panel, who looked at the proposals for West Sussex said he was delighted by the Board approved model three. He said: "The case for change made by the PCT was very clear. Healthcare cannot stand still and changes have to be made. But the public's voice was also clear – the majority did not want to lose A&E services or see a reduction in health services at their local hospital. By adopting this model for the people of West Sussex, I think that the (West Sussex) PCT has listened to clinicians and the public but at the same time has ensured the model for hospital care is one that will last. Model three means health services will remain local where possible and will only be centralised where the benefits for patients are clear – such as maternity services. I welcome this news. "

The Joint HOSC was formed in July 2007 to consider West Sussex PCT and Brighton and Hove PCT's Fit for the Future proposals. Councillor David Rogers and Councillor Diane Phillips are the East Sussex HOSC representatives on the Joint HOSC. Councillor Sylvia Tidy is the substitute. The councillors ensure that they bring the East Sussex dimension to the review.

## **Centralisation of some services to one hospital – including consultant-led maternity services**



The PCT's decision means that there will be the gradual centralisation to one hospital site (the major general hospital – either Worthing or Chichester) of some services: consultant-led maternity services, inpatient children's services, emergency surgery, for example acute appendicitis and the majority of trauma cases, including hip fractures. These changes will be supported by the development of services in primary and community care and increased investment in the ambulance service.

As well as the consultant-led maternity service, West Sussex PCT has promised to increase the range of birthing options for local women by providing two midwife-led units at other locations in West Sussex; a service which is currently not available.

Councillor Tidy said, 'The Joint HOSC is not persuaded of the safety or desirability of only one consultant-led maternity unit in West Sussex (especially with the changes proposed in East Sussex). The committee would prefer to see the retention of a second consultant-led unit north of the South Downs at Princess Royal Hospital, and will need to debate this further with West Sussex PCT.'

## Location of the major general hospital

The Board of West Sussex PCT will decide whether centralised services should be provided at either St Richard's Hospital in Chichester or Worthing Hospital when it meets at 2pm on Wednesday 4 June 2008 at the Copthorne Hotel in Copthorne. The meeting is being held in public and the PCT is encouraging members of the public to attend and observe the proceedings. The meeting will be broadcast live on the internet.

The Joint HOSC will then meet on Wednesday June 25 to consider the decisions made by the PCT and will respond with any comments and final recommendations. A key point of discussion will be the PCT's plans for maternity services at the Princess Royal Hospital

The PCT Board is due to meet on Thursday July 10 to either confirm or amend the decisions made, taking into account the views of the Joint HOSC.

If the Joint HOSC is not persuaded by the Primary Care Trusts' final decisions, it retains the right to make a referral to the Secretary of State for Health.

Link: [www.southeastcoastfff.nhs.uk](http://www.southeastcoastfff.nhs.uk).

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## Next HOSC meeting

The next HOSC meeting is **10am Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008** at County Hall, Lewes.

Webcast recordings and further details of meetings are available on the HOSC website: [www.eastsussexhealth.org](http://www.eastsussexhealth.org)

### HOSC 2007/2008

East Sussex County Council: **Cllr Sylvia Tidy, Chairman; Cllr David Rogers OBE Vice Chairman; Cllr Beryl Healy; Cllr Philip Howson; Cllr Ruth O'Keeffe; Cllr Barry Taylor; Cllr John Wilson**

**Cllr Alex Hough**, Eastbourne Borough Council; **Cllr Eve Martin**, Hastings Borough Council; **Cllr Carolyn Lambert**, Lewes District Council; **Cllr Angharad Davies**, Rother District Council; **Cllr Diane Phillips**, Wealden District Council

Voluntary services' representatives: **Mr Ralph Chapman** Chairman, Age Concern East Sussex; **Ms Debby Matthews** Director, Southdowns CVS

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) representative: To be nominated

East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is managed by East Sussex County Council and works in partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council

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