

Nottinghamshire County Council Overview and Scrutiny

**Findings and Recommendations on the proposals
Improving access to GPs in Kirkby-in-Ashfield
through *Fairness in Primary Care***

17 April 2007

Kirkby GP Services Select Committee

Background and Introduction

The Kirkby GP Services Select Committee is pleased to provide comments on the proposals from Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust (the tPCT) to changes in the local NHS in Kirkby in Ashfield - Improving access to GPs in Kirkby-in-Ashfield through *Fairness in Primary Care*.

The Kirkby GP Services Select Committee is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee designated responsible by Nottinghamshire County Council for considering this proposal. The Chair of the Select Committee is Councillor Yvonne Davidson and the Vice-Chair is Councillor Mrs K L Cutts. The Select Committee has co-opted 3 elected members from Ashfield District Council.

The Select Committee met twice to consider the proposals and held meetings in the locality in Kirkby in Ashfield on

- 27 March 2007
- 16 April 2007

The agenda, reports and minutes of these meetings are public record.

The primary aims of health overview and scrutiny are to ensure that:

- health services reflect the views and aspirations of local communities
- all sections of local communities have equal access to services
- all sections of local communities have an equal chance of a successful outcome from services.¹

The aim of formally consulting an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to consider:

1. whether, as a statutory body, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been properly consulted within the consultation process;
2. whether, in developing the proposals for service changes, the health body concerned has taken into account the public interest through appropriate patient and public involvement and consultation;
3. whether, a proposal for change is in the interests of the local health service.

The content of this final response was agreed at a meeting of the Select Committee on 16 April 2007 and was compiled by the Chair, Councillor Yvonne Davidson and Vice-Chair, Councillor Mrs K L Cutts.

This is the response of the Select Committee as agreed on 16 April 2007.

¹ substantial variations **and developments** of health services – a guide – CfPS 2005

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Response

The Select Committee welcomes Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust's (tPCT) intention to improve access to primary care in Kirkby in Ashfield.

Addressing the specific aims of consulting the Select Committee:

whether, in developing the proposals for service changes, the health body concerned has taken into account the public interest through appropriate patient and public involvement and consultation;

Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust provided the Select Committee with evidence that it has attempted to consult widely in bringing the proposals forward. Members have also been provided with evidence showing that the Public and Patient Involvement Forum have been engaged in the process. During the consultation the Select Committee identified a gap in the consultation and made a specific recommendation for the tPCT to address. The Select Committee received evidence to show that the tPCT had made efforts to address the recommendation and to improve consultation with the communities of Annesley, however circumstances, including public holidays had limited the effectiveness of these efforts.

The Select Committee notes the disturbance in communication between the tPCT and local GPs and makes specific recommendations elsewhere in this response for the tPCT to address this. Members were also concerned that the difficulties in communication between the tPCT and GPs led to some of the information contained within the consultation document being potentially misleading and confusing.

The Select Committee believes that the tPCT has made efforts to consult and has had some success in doing so, however the Select Committee also considers that there is scope for future improvement. The Select Committee recommends that the tPCT provide feedback from the responses received during the consultation and evidence on how the tPCT has taken on board issues raised during the consultation to a meeting of the Select Committee on 4 June 2007.

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whether, a proposal for change is in the interests of the local health service

The Select Committee acknowledges the need to improve access to GPs and welcomes the proposals from Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust to convert Byron Ward in Ashfield Community Hospital into a primary care centre and to provide a greater range of services for patients in Kirkby in Ashfield. The Select Committee considers that these proposals to be in the interests of some patients.

The Select Committee considers that there would be advantages for patients in Kirkby in Ashfield if the primary care centre was operated by and the range of new services provided by existing local GPs. The Select Committee notes that this was previously a preferred option, utilising the traditional GP contract and that this was abandoned following a break down in communication between the tPCT and local GPs. **The Select Committee considers this to be a preferred solution and recommends that the tPCT should immediately explore with local GPs whether this option could still be pursued.** The Select Committee believes that the residents of Kirkby in Ashfield have already waited long enough for improved services and would not expect the tPCT to slow the implementation of the proposals in order to undertake this dialogue. Therefore the Select Committee notes that there is limited time to reach an agreement between the tPCT and GPs and strongly encourages all parties to work together for the benefit of the residents and patients of Kirkby in Ashfield. If agreement could be reached then the Select Committee would support this in favour of the use of an APMS contract.

The Select Committee made a number of recommendations for the tPCT to address in taking the proposals forward. Members also noted the commitment from the tPCT to protect the rights and entitlements of NHS staff working to provide services for the residents of Kirkby in Ashfield under any APMS contract.

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Summary of Recommendations

The Select Committee recommends that:

- the tPCT should immediately contact GPs in Kirkby in Ashfield to explore whether the proposed services and new facilities at the Ashfield Community Hospital could be provided by local GPs under a non APMS contract.
- there should be no loss or reduction of GP provision if the proposals are taken forward, with no current GPs involuntarily displaced.
- the tPCT should undertake further work with and encourage GPs in Kirkby in Ashfield to increase the services available to patients.
- the tPCT should look for further ways to improve health in Kirkby in Ashfield and that the proposals should not be considered as the only solution necessary.
- the tPCT should develop a travel plan that addresses the needs of the Community and reflects the issues of travel, access and parking identified during the consultation.
- the tPCT should work in partnership with other agencies to develop the travel plan so that it compliments other work to address wider travel issues in Kirkby in Ashfield and the Town's Master plan.
- the tPCT attend a meeting of the Select Committee on 4 June 2007 and provide Members with the following information:
 - feedback from the responses received during the consultation and how the tPCT has taken on board issues raised
 - should the proposal progress, an overview of the tendering process and possible contract terms to be used for the APMS
 - an update on progress of the tPCT working with local GPs