

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
MARCH 26 2009**

**RAPID SCRUTINY EXERCISE  
23 MARCH 2009**

**TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY TO HEALTH SERVICES**

**Purpose and Background**

1. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 – The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) recommended to the management committee to undertake a review of transport arrangements to all Wiltshire healthcare facilities. This issue was particularly highlighted during consideration of the petition from Melksham residents about having to travel to either Chippenham or Trowbridge for MIU services
2. January 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 – The O&S Management Committee approve rapid scrutiny exercise.
3. March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 – Rapid Scrutiny of Healthcare in Wiltshire undertaken. In attendance:

**Members**

Mr Tony Deane	Lead member/O&S Management Committee
Mrs Pat Rugg	O&S Management Committee/Health O&S Committee
Dr John English	O&S Management Committee/Health O&S Committee

**Officers**

Alison Knowles	Director NHS Wiltshire
Alan Creedy	Local Transport & Development Manager (WCC)
Ian White	Head of Passenger Transport (WCC)
Rob Murphy	Team Leader Transport Policy (WCC)
Ceri Williams	Scrutiny Officer (WCC)
Marie Gondlach	Member Support Assistant (WCC)

**Summary of Concluding Views**

4. The key message to emerge from NHS Wiltshire was that there was not a problem in accessing healthcare facilities across the county. It was acknowledged that on an individual basis there were some difficulties but when taking an overview it was not problematic. This was in part because the majority of services were delivered locally and 80% of people accessed services via car. For example:
  - 86% of people receive health services through primary care such as GP practices, dentists, pharmacists and opticians
  - 99% of people live within 3 miles of their surgery

5. However, following regular public consultative exercises undertaken by WCC's Passenger Transport Unit two areas for improvement consistently emerged:

- (a) Better weekend services
- (b) Better access to healthcare services

To understand the differences between paragraphs 4 and 5 it was recognised that further work was necessary.

6. Using People's Voice, NHS Wiltshire was about to undertake research to ascertain current public perceptions about access to their services. This survey could help to unravel why perceptions about access did not match the facilities available on the ground. The potential of working closely on this area was supported by both partners.
7. Dialogue between the PCT and County's Transport Officers was not currently taking place in relation to planning applications. It was felt that by discussing future developments at pre-application stage, issues could be ironed out proactively. Currently the relationship was reactive, with transport officers commenting on applications following submission. NHS Wiltshire had been working closely with planners from West Wilts District Council on existing applications but was happy to open dialogue, referring to a potential development in Salisbury as an opportunity to kick-start this relationship.
8. It was also felt that Wiltshire Council's new governance arrangements would be helpful at a number of levels. Firstly, the Area Boards would offer the opportunity for NHS Wiltshire and the local authority to undertake localised consultation in regards to access to health facilities. Strategically, the Family of Partners would again promote partnership working between Wiltshire's public bodies, including the potential to tackle issues such as access to healthcare.

## Recommendations

9.
  - (a) That the O&S Management Committee endorses the report
  - (b) That at pre-application stage NHS Wiltshire commits to engaging with Wiltshire Council's Transport Officers to discuss potential developments
  - (c) That NHS Wiltshire's 'access to healthcare' People's Voice questionnaire is sent to the Head of Passenger Transport for comment in advance of circulation.
  - (d) That NHS Wiltshire report the results of this questionnaire to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee