

**JOINT EAST BERKSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
SCRUTINY REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

REPORT TO: The Joint East Berks Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 30th March 2010

FROM: Councillor Robert Plimmer (Slough Borough Council) on behalf of
the Working Group:

Councillor Cynthia Endacott – Windsor & Maidenhead Council
Councillor Tony Virgo –Bracknell Forest Council
Jacky Flynn – Slough Local Involvement Networks

CONTACT OFFICER: Sunita Sharma – Scrutiny Support Officer
Slough Borough Council
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875480

**SCRUTINY REVIEW INTERIM REPORT - CAR PARKING ARRANGMENTS AT NHS
ESTABLISHMENTS IN EAST BERKSHIRE**

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides the committee with an interim position with respect to the review into car parking at NHS establishments within East Berkshire.

2 Recommendation(s) / Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to resolve:

- a) That the report be noted
- b) Endorse the next steps

3 Supporting Information

3.1 Background

In June 2009, members of the committee put forward a proposal to set up a working group to investigate the arrangements around car parking in more detail. The view of the Committee was that there were serious concerns about the existing contractual arrangement, how income from the car parking charges was being utilised, insufficient parking availability, lack of information for the public on exemptions and the impact if any on the levels of crime.

The proposal was supported by all three authorities and resources and membership of the working group were identified. As the lead authority, Slough Borough Council committed scrutiny support for the study.

3.2 Membership

The membership of the group was confirmed as follows:

Councillor Cynthia Endacott	Windsor & Maidenhead Council
Councillor Robert Plimmer	Slough Borough Council
Councillor Tony Virgo	Bracknell Forest Council
Jacky Flynn	Slough Local Involvement Networks

3.3 Scope

The group looked at the scope of the review under two main headings:

a) Rationale

The issue of car parking had been identified by elected members as a key issue for the public and relates to the accessibility of an essential service. Further the Health and Social Care Act 2001 scrutiny provisions allow Local Authorities via their scrutiny committees to review any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services within the area. Thus in carrying out a review into car parking arrangements the committee would be using their statutory power to investigate a matter which does impact upon the provision and accessibility of health services for local residents.

b) Review Aims and Objectives

Given the possible scale of the review it was felt that the review should have a clear focus on the following issues:

- Car Parking Exemption Policy - for both the Hospital Trusts and PCT
- Finances - Understanding the charging policy, costs, profits and fines
- Accessibility - Access to spaces for patients
- Complaints - an analysis of complaints relating to car parking charges from the Trusts and PCTs
- Crime Levels - the impact on crime levels if any, after introduction of car parking charges & security measures

These objectives would naturally involve investigating the current state of affairs as well as future plans, understanding community views and the impact if any on nearby areas to the hospitals.

3.4 Methodology/Approach

The Working Group identified the key activities required for the review with time-scales which formed the basis of the project plan (summary in Appendix 1). It can be seen that seven main blocks of work were identified. The predominant approach for the review was to initially gather qualitative data in terms of interviewing

representatives from the Trusts and PCT, conducting site visits, consulting public opinion and assessing (as far as possible) the impact of abolishing car-parking in Scotland and Wales; supported by quantitative data.

3.4.1 Site Visits

Site visits were conducted on the 18th and 21st January 2010 at the following hospitals:

- Heatherwood
- King Edward
- St Marks
- Upton
- Wexham

The purpose of the visits was primarily to gather first hand experience of using the car park, ascertaining if there was an exemption policy, accessibility of spaces and so forth. The site visits proved to be useful and the results provided useful comparative data as well as a base line for subsequent work.

3.4.2 Community view / Publicity

The study was publicised in both the local press and on BBC Berkshire website inviting residents and patients to share their experiences. This produced a reasonable response from the public but one that indicated a significant strength of feeling about this issue. All the responses so far have been grouped according to issue. Further work in terms of publicity has been earmarked around combining efforts to put out a joint statement from all three authorities about the progress of the study.

3.4.3 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with four representatives on the 11th March:

Greg Scott	General Manager/Assistant Director of Infrastructure Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust
Owen Thomas	Travel Plan Co-Ordinator Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust
Paul Rowley	Managing Director Berkshire Shared Services “
Stephanie Gould	Associate Director of Facilities

Again these proved to be very constructive. Further interviews are planned for April and May where we hope to invite board members of the Trust and PCT as well as other interested parties.

4.0 Next Steps

The timetable attached (Appendix 1) gives a summary of tasks undertaken so far and those outlined for the coming weeks. Appendix 2 gives an outline of the broad blocks of work to be undertaken in April and May and the Working Group will meet at the beginning of April to agree the detail of the next steps. Notably, there will be additional interviews with expert witnesses, further exploration into the impact of abolishing car parks in Scotland & Wales, before dissemination and evaluation of all the evidence gathered so far.

Appendix 1:Car Parking Review of NHS establishments- Project Plan weeks 1-12 summary

Date w/c		11/1	18/1	25/1	1/2	8/2	15/2	22/2	1/3	8/3	15/3	22/3	29/3
1.Pre Project planning	Nov/ Dec												
i) Identify resources													
ii) Establish Working Group													
iii) Agree Scope of project													
iv) Identify activities													
v) Draw up project plan													
2.Site visits													
i) St Marks													
ii) Heatherwood													
iii) King Edward													
iv) Wexham													
v) Upton													
3. Stakeholders & Witnesses													
i) Letter to stakeholders													
ii) Identify potential witnesses													
iii) Interview Witnesses													
iv) Contact ward councillors of hospital areas													
4. Publicity													
i) Press & publicity inc (BBC Berkshire website) inviting public comment													
ii) Collate findings including scrutiny mailbox/letters													
5. National evidence													
i) Government consultation													
ii) Scottish Parliament													
iii) Analysis of Dept of Health guidance													

Appendix 1 (continued): Car Parking Review of NHS establishments- Project Plan weeks 1-12 summary

Date w/c		11/1	18/1	25/1	1/2	8/2	15/2	22/2	1/3	8/3	15/3	22/3	29/3
6. Local evidence													
i) Collect policies from local NHS on car parking policy, exemptions, contracts, finances, complaints & crime levels													
ii) Collate all minutes & letters relating to Car Parking 08/09 and 09/10													
7. Progress monitoring													
i) Review meetings with Working party													
ii) Interim report to JEBHO&S													

Shaded areas indicate estimated timescales.

Notes

1 Pre-Project planning

Once the Working Group had been established, the first meeting took place in November 2009, where preliminary discussions on the background, scope and activities were discussed. A project plan spanning 12 weeks was then drawn up which identified seven blocks of work with estimated time scales.

2 Site visits

These were initially earmarked for Dec 2009, but due to the bad weather were rescheduled and completed in mid January 2010.

3 Stakeholders and Witnesses

Chief Executives of the Hospital Trust and PCT were notified of the study again in January 2010 prior to the site visits (first communication about the study had been made in Autumn 2009).

The first batch of expert witnesses were also notified of the study and invited to contribute to the study. Meetings were conducted on the 8th of March 2010.

More recently, contact has been made with John Jones, Director of Corporate Affairs of Heatherwood & Wexham Trust, and representatives from the Planning department at Slough Borough Council notifying them of the study. It is likely that they will be included in the 2nd round of interviews to take place in May.

4 Publicity

The review has been publicised locally in the press and website. The press teams in all three authorities were notified of the study. Further joint publicity has been earmarked in the coming weeks.

5 National evidence

The Working Group submitted a response to the Government's NHS consultation on car parking charges on the 23rd February 2010.

Some research has been conducted on the impact of the abolished car parking charges and further work will be scheduled in the coming weeks including contacting the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

6 Local Evidence

i) An exercise is underway to collect policies, contracts, finances, complaints and crime levels. This is approximately 60% complete with the remainder scheduled in the next timetable.

7 Progress monitoring

Progress is monitored by review meetings with the Working Group and regular email exchange; with an interim report to the JEBHOS Committee on the 30th March 2010.

Appendix 2: Next Steps Timeline

Date w/c	April				May				
	5/4	12/4	19/4	26/4	3/5	10/5	17/5	24/5	31/5
1. Working group meeting - identify detail of next steps	→								
2. Interview(s) - Board members (Chair) Trust & PCT - Planning & - Transport Depts (SBC) - Revisit interviewees if required			→						
3. Dissemination of evidence - Interviews - Policies/contracts/financial information - National consultation (if results known) - National research (Scotland/Wales) Interview							→		
4. Collate and write up study									→
5. Publicity of upcoming JEBHO&S meeting & final stages of study - Press - Websites - Radio									→
6. Final report to JEBHO&S									→