

HEALTH PANEL

THURSDAY 20 MAY 1999

Present: Councillors Barnard, Blatchford, Mills, Mrs Pile, Mrs Shillcock, Thompson, and Wheaton

Berkshire Health Authority: Ed Macalister Smith

Bracknell Forest Primary Care Group: Diane Hedges

Apologies were received from:

Councillors Mrs Doyle, Fawcett and Veakins
Phillip Burgess, Margaret Edwards, Christina Pond and
Mike Taylor

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mills be elected Chairman of the Panel

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Barnard be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

3. Terms Of Reference

The Panel considered a report setting out its terms of reference.

After some discussion, it was agreed that there was a need to amend them to ensure that they recognised the partnership between the local authority and the health services.

In addition, Diane Hedges suggested that she believed it would be helpful to have a second representative of the Bracknell Primary Care Group on the Panel. In response to this, the Chairman indicated that he would like to consider this further

RECOMMENDED that the Terms of Reference of the Health Panel be amended to read:

A Panel comprising 9 Members (5:4), appropriate Officers of BFBC, Chief Executives of Berkshire Health Authority, Bracknell Forest Primary Care Group, Heatherwood & Wexham Park NHS Hospital Trust and East Berkshire Community NHS Hospital Trust and a representative nominated by the Chairman of the East Berkshire Community Health Council, reporting to the Strategy & Policy Committee and established to:

- 1 To provide both the Local Authority and the Health Services with a forum for positively influencing the development of Local Health services as co-ordinated by the Berkshire Health Authority and Bracknell Primary Care Group.*

- 2 *To provide a focus for Bracknell Forest Borough Council and the Health Service to address the priorities of the Green Paper – Our Healthier Nation.*
- 3 *To review and recommend measures to strengthen the Council's partnerships with the Health Authority, Health Trusts, Primary Care Group and other agencies in order to promote the health of the Borough and to improve joint working and planning.*
- 4 *To evaluate and promote developments in health provision for Bracknell Forest residents and to make recommendations to the Strategy & Policy Committee on the Council's responses.*
- 5 *To establish clear links between the Council's health-related services in Education, Social Services, Public & Environmental Services, Leisure, and Planning & Transportation in order to ensure a co-ordinated approach.*

4. **Health in Bracknell Forest – Partnership Between the Health Service and the Local Authority**

The Panel received a report explaining the background to the evolving partnership arrangements between local authorities and the Health Service. This was supported by a presentation by the Director of Social Services & Housing. The Panel noted that two key themes had emerged:

- i The intention to bring Local Authority Services and Health Service provision closer together, both at the front line as well as in the way these services are planned.
- ii The expectation that all agencies work together to create new and innovative approaches which can help achieve mutually agreed objectives.

Ed Macalister Smith endorsed the report and presentation, indicating that he was sure the way in which health authorities were currently working was by no means ideal, but that by working with local authorities improvements could be made.

Diane Hedges indicated that it would be important for the Borough Council's representatives to understand the pressures facing the Health Authority and the framework in which it had to operate. It was agreed that the Strategic Review was a topic which the Panel should discuss in more detail at its next meeting as it would help it understand the constraints faced.

Ed Macalister Smith stated that, whilst the Health Improvement Programme set out the aims of the local Health Authority, it was unlikely that it would have any influence over national funding. It was therefore important to look at the services currently being provided and determine whether the funds already available were being put to best use.

In noting that one of the concerns of people in Bracknell was the lack of a local hospital, Trevor Farmer indicated that discussions were to take place regarding the re-provision of the Skimpid Hill Health Centre, but Diane Hedges stated that this was not the answer to the issue of Bracknell's lack of hospital.

The panel welcomed the report and ensuing discussion which had set the scene for its future role.

5. **Health Improvement Programme**

Diane Hedges made a presentation to the Panel on the Health Improvement Programme. She drew the Panel's attention, in particular, to the "Jarman Scores" which were used as an indicator of health need. From these, it was clear that Bracknell Forest was better off than many places.

She indicated that the three key priorities to be addressed in Bracknell Forest were:

- Coronary Heart Disease/Stroke
- Mental Health
- Teenage Health

The Health Improvement Programme identified issues, but it was then a matter of facing up to the challenges posed in tackling these issues and seizing every opportunity to make a difference.

Diane answered a number of questions posed by Members regarding the reasons behind the selection of the three priorities. Amongst the key points made during the discussion were:

- That alcohol abuse was a major issue amongst the young in the district.
- That there was a need to choose a way of measuring the impact of initiatives to tackle the priorities.
- That in some cases where the benefits of action might not be immediately evident, it would be necessary to measure the process rather than the outcomes.
- That people needed to take personal responsibility for tackling the problems.
- That discussions were held with representatives of the private sector through their association.

In response to a suggestion that the Programme seemed very prescriptive and perhaps not flexible enough to meet the challenges, the Panel was reminded that the Programme was updated annually and was therefore a dynamic document and able to respond to changing circumstances.

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the Panel should next meet at 7pm on Monday 5 July 1999, or if that proved to be inconvenient for a significant number of its Members, Thursday 8 July 1999.

**The meeting commenced at 7pm
and concluded at 8.30pm**

CHAIRMAN