

Agenda Item 1 refers

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Executive Committee

Date: 9 June 2000

Subject: **Liaison on Regional Health Issues**

Report of: Director

Recommendation

That the Committee considers the proposal to create a Healthy Region Forum with a view to guiding the Director's continuing discussions with the Regional NHS Executive.

1. Background

1.1 This report follows the widely appreciated debate on health strategy that took place at the 9 February Assembly plenary in Brighton & Hove. A key outcome of that debate was a desire to develop a dialogue between the Assembly and the Regional NHS Executive. Following discussions between officials this paper proposes a means of sustaining such a dialogue.

2. A Healthy Region Forum

2.1 Members will be aware from Barbara Stocking's presentation to the Assembly that the regional NHS Executive has set out a three year programme to improve health in the South East. A draft of that programme was circulated to all Assembly members, and copies of the final agreed plan have been requested. Since the production of that plan the Government has confirmed 13 national health priorities and targets; the region aims to contribute to the achievement of those priorities through the programme of work agreed in 'Improving Health in the South East'.

2.2 It is self-evident that good health in the region is not the sole responsibility of the NHS; many other bodies have a very important part to play in shaping the social, economic and environmental context in which people live and work. The NHS Executive sees a dialogue with the Assembly as a means of building that 'joined up' commitment to the region's health priorities.

- 2.3 The Assembly is committed to finding new ways of working appropriate to purpose. The proposed model for this dialogue is a 'Healthy Region Forum', taking the form not of an Assembly 'committee' but of an ongoing conference led by the Assembly that would convene periodically for two purposes:
- To receive from the NHS Executive an updated assessment of progress being made on the 13 health priorities in the region.
 - To discuss in some depth and arrive at action points in respect of specific priorities.
- 2.4 The Forum could for the sake of consistency and continuity comprise a core membership of Assembly members according to an appropriate template (for example, 20 members in all, 14 from local authorities and six from social environmental and economic partners). However it is proposed that the periodic meetings of the Forum (two or three a year) should be open to all members to attend and participate in, perhaps according to their interest in the specific subject matter. Besides local authorities, other relevant bodies would also be encouraged to participate in preparing papers and presentations – e.g. the Environment Agency, Sport England.

3. Other Dimensions to the Dialogue

- 3.1 Following the decision of the Executive Committee on 24 March the NHS Executive has been invited to nominate a health sector representative to the Assembly as from the July AGM.
- 3.2 There is considerable interest from the NHS Executive in other dimensions of the Assembly's business, including regional planning – particularly affordable housing in tight labour market areas – and relations with London.

Paul Bevan
Director

23 May 2000