

## COUNCIL - 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

### ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1) **Question from Councillor Byrom to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Social Care) - Cllr. Anthony Hill.**

“It has been recognised that the system of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny of NHS Health Trusts has been very successful, it has improved transparency, accountability and the holding to account of unelected NHS Directors by the elected representatives of local residents.

Could the Chair outline what effect the new legislative proposals will have on the existing local scrutiny process, what effect the Health and Well-being Boards will have and if he believes that proper scrutiny and the holding to account of the Health Service by local communities will still continue in the current excellent way.”

**Response from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Social Care)**

“I agree that the current method of scrutiny of NHS Trusts is important and has proved to be an effective way of holding them to account.

The proposals in the Health and Social Care Bill will enable Local Authorities to discharge their health scrutiny powers in the way they consider to be the most suitable whether through continuing to have a specific Health OSC or through a suitable alternative arrangement. The Bill confers the health overview and scrutiny functions directly on the local authority itself.

The original proposal that the health scrutiny function would be subsumed within the Health & Wellbeing Board was withdrawn.

The councillor representation on the Health & Wellbeing Board will give elected members a greater involvement in the development, planning and commissioning of health services.

I believe that the flexibility given to local authorities will enable them to continue to have an effective Health Scrutiny role and may well enhance it.”

**2) Question from Councillor Welsh to Cabinet Member Corporate Services – Councillor Parry**

“At its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) considered a report concerning the use of the current ‘0845’ prefix to the Corporate Customer Contact Centre telephone number. Sefton CAB had highlighted the relatively higher cost of telephoning the Sefton Plus Contact Centre on 0845 140 0845, compared to alternative landline numbers.

It was suggested that for some customers it would be cheaper for them to ring the Contact Centre on one of the two existing geographical numbers, namely, 01704 533 133, for residents in the North of the Borough, and 0151 922 4040, for residents in the South of the Borough, as these numbers were now automatically routed to the Sefton Plus Contact Centre.

In part (2) of the resolution, the Committee agreed that: “the Cabinet Member be requested to consider the ‘promotion’ of the two existing geographical numbers 01704 533133 and 0151 922 4040, as alternative ways of accessing the Sefton Plus Contact Centre, rather than introducing a new number with an 03 prefix.”

I wish to ask the Cabinet Member whether she will support the promotion of the existing geographical numbers in parallel with 0845 140 0845?”

**Response from the Cabinet Member – Corporate Services**

“The two local numbers in question route through to the Council’s Sefton Plus Call Centre. Any member of the public ringing these 2 local numbers could be faced with an engaged tone as they are only single lines. The 0845 number has 28 available lines and therefore offers a greater level of access and efficiency to the public. Two years on from the original report and as part of the promotion of the Council’s excellent Call Centre, the Council should be promoting more focused access to services rather than a variety of different numbers.

With 154 transactions and forms available online via the Council’s website, promotional effort should go into encouraging take-up of online services as that would save money for both the public and the Council.”