

Statement from the Chairman

I would like to explain a bit about this item and role of Dorset Council in responding to consultations and proposals for changes to NHS services in Dorset. How we intend to do things in Dorset Council is a little different from how they worked when the County Council was responsible for the old Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee.

Councils do not make decisions about the provision of NHS services but sometimes we are consulted about proposals for change. If the Council intends to respond to a NHS consultation then colleagues on the People and Health Overview Committee have a role in shaping the council's consultation response.

The Committee that I chair, the People and Health Scrutiny Committee, does not respond when the NHS is still at the stage of consulting about proposals for possible changes to services. Instead the Scrutiny Committee can become involved later if there is a need to review and look again at significant changes to NHS services.

I have received a lot of correspondence about Purbeck rapid response and indeed, this is a matter that was raised with the previous Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee. This has prompted me to include an item on our agenda today and to invite NHS colleagues to outline their next steps. At this stage, when NHS colleagues are about to launch a consultation, this committee does not have a role to play in responding to the consultation. That work will be led by Cllr Andrew Kerby and the People and Health Overview Committee. It may be that in due course when the consultation has closed and NHS colleagues have made a decision about the future of rapid response in Purbeck that my committee will decide to scrutinise those plans before they take effect but we are not there yet.

For the moment, I have taken the pragmatic decision to have this item on the agenda today so that NHS colleagues can provide some early information about their planned engagement and consultation activity. There is no decision to be made by the Committee today.