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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TEAM

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TO:

Healthcare for London
 Freepost Consulting the Capital

Please contact: Anthony Clements
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Date: 11 February 2008

Your Reference:

Our Reference: **AC**

Dear Sir/Madam

Response of Outer North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Healthcare for London – Consulting the Capital Consultation

I am writing on behalf of the Outer North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to give the Committee's formal response to the above Consultation. The Committee is made up of Councillors from the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest as well as observer Members from Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council. Several co-opted Members of the Committee have also input into the Committee's formal response which is shown below. Please would you note that, as previously discussed with your Head of Communications, this response does not preclude in any way individual constituent Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committees from making their own responses to the Consultation and indeed, you are likely to receive several of these during the Consultation period. This response has also been copied to the Chairman and Clerk of the Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it is that Committee which is the statutory consultee in this instance.

The response of the Outer North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Healthcare for London – Consulting the Capital Consultation is as follows:

1. **The Consultation Document itself** – The Committee feels that the document is too simplistic and fails to deal with funding issues regarding the reshaping of services. The consultation document only talks about positive aspects and it is difficult to disagree with the overall principles, given the way in which they are worded. This also makes it difficult to give negative responses to the questionnaire. Indeed, Members feel that the questions asked in the document have been loaded in order to produce the responses desired by the Health Trusts.
2. **GP Services** – The Committee is unconvinced by the prospect of GPs being open longer hours as several GP practices in London Borough of Redbridge have in fact been closed down by the relevant Primary Care Trust (PCT) in the last 18 months. Healthcare for London places more emphasis on community facilities. Members have however received numerous reports of local GPs not spotting underlying conditions such as asthma and are not therefore convinced that the proposed community facilities will have sufficient expertise. The Committee is also

concerned that the proposed community facilities may lead to a doubling up of services already offered by hospitals.

3. Role of Primary Care Trusts – The consultation is being led by the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts yet the Committee feels that PCTs have not been reflecting the views of their communities. The Committee feels that it and hence local people were not listened to during the Fit for the Future pre-consultation and the Committee is therefore concerned that the PCTs will once again fail to listen to these views during any consultation on the phase 2 proposals.

4. Growth Rate Statistics – The Committee questions the assumptions used in the document with regard to future population growth etc. and is unconvinced that the proposed reforms will deliver sufficient capacity for London's health needs.

5. Burden on Carers – The document does not give enough emphasis to the role of carers. The Committee is also concerned that proposals such as allowing people to die at home, although possibly having merit in themselves, will inevitably result in an increase in the burden on carers.

6. Increase in Specialist Centres – There is concern by the Committee that the increase in prevalence of specialist centres of the type referred to in the consultation document will lead to the downgrading by stealth of local hospitals.

7. Financial Issues – The Committee feels that the severe financial difficulties currently experienced by some local Health Trusts will make the Healthcare for London plans unworkable.

8. Partnership Working – The Committee is concerned that the proposals will effect little improvement in the Health Sector's partnership working with Local Authorities. Should this prove to be the case, the Committee is also concerned that the proposals will have little impact on health inequalities in London.

9. Transport Issues – It is the view of the Committee that transport issues have not been sufficiently considered during the consultation process. Services located closer to people's homes still need to be easily accessible and this issue has not been addressed in the consultation document.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Clements
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer

CC: Gabrielle Teague, Head of Communications, Healthcare for London
Councillor Mary O'Connor, Chairman, Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ben Vinter, Officer Clerking Team, Pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
All Members and Supporting Officers, Outer North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee