

7. Do you have any other comments on either the consultation process or your preferred choice?

While we welcome the introduction of independent scrutiny with respect to NHS decision making, we would anticipate that the Government will delay implementing any recommendations until the outcome of the Local Healthcare Bill consultation is known to facilitate a coordinated implementation of changes.

Questions

1. Do you agree that an expert panel is the most effective way to provide independent scrutiny? If not, what would be your preferred choice?

The introduction of a more robust scrutiny arrangement within NHS is to be welcomed. In East Ayrshire, we support any moves to enhance public scrutiny of decisions made by public bodies. That notwithstanding, it would be prudent to await details of the outcome of the Local Health Care (Scotland) Bill consultation prior to making a final decision with regard to the best scrutiny model.

In addition, it would be helpful for a definition of "major change" to be provided.

2. Do you agree that the role of the panel should be to assess the safety, sustainability, evidence-base and value for money of proposals for major changes to local NHS services?

The role of the any independent scrutiny model to assess safety, sustainability, evidence base and value for money seems appropriate.

In addition, cross referencing to Community Planning activity and local service developments outwith the NHS may be advantageous in terms of developing a more comprehensive approach to public service provision within a local authority or health board area.

3. Do you agree that the chair should be a lay person appointed by Scottish Ministers?

The Chair of any independent scrutiny model as a politically restricted lay person would appear to be appropriate.

4. Do you agree that the panel should have a lay majority among its members?

Any independent scrutiny model should include lay people and have access to appropriate professional support to advise with professional and ethical decision making.

5. Do you agree that the panel should assess the evidence and options during the process of public engagement prior to consultation, and provide a commentary on these that would be available to the Board and to Ministers in reaching decisions?

Assessing the evidence and options in advance of public consultation is welcome.

6. Do you have any other comments on how independent scrutiny should be carried out, or on the guidance on “Informing, engaging and consulting the public in developing health and community care services” at Annex 3?

East Ayrshire Council welcomes any proposals which will ensure the public are supported to comment on and help shape the development of all public services within the Community Planning Partnership area. Where opportunities exist to undertake such activities in partnership we would positively engage in that process.