

# A G E N D A

## Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Friday, 2nd December, 2005**

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Time: **10.00 a.m.**

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Place: **The Town Hall, Hereford**

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Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

*For any further information please contact:*

*Tim Brown, Members' Services, Tel 01432  
260239*

*e-mail [tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk)*

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**County of Herefordshire  
District Council**



# AGENDA

## for the Meeting of the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs. E.M. Bew, R.B.A. Burke, K.G. Grumbley, J.W. Hope MBE,  
R. Mills, Ms. G.A. Powell, D.C. Taylor and P.G. Turpin

	Pages
1. <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive apologies for absence.	
2. <b>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</b> To receive details of any Member nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee	
3. <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on this Agenda.	
4. <b>MINUTES</b> To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th October, 2005.	1 - 4
5. <b>SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY</b> To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
6. <b>PERFORMANCE/BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006</b> To report the position on a selection of priority Performance Indicators and provide information about current performance management work and the budget.	5 - 12
7. <b>LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES</b> To consider issues relating to the future delivery of the service and the need for change.	
8. <b>HOMELESSNESS CONSULTATION EVENT - OUTCOME</b> To consider the outcomes of the Homelessness consultation event in October and the next steps.	13 - 14

**9. JOINT TEAM WITH THE PENSION SERVICE AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR** | 15 - 20

To note the development of a Joint Team with the Pension Service and Voluntary Sector to provide an integrated service for older people.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Childrens' Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises corporate matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **Public Involvement at Community Services Scrutiny Committee Meetings**

You can contact Councillors and Officers at any time about Scrutiny Committee matters and issues which you would like the Scrutiny Committees to investigate.

There are also two other ways in which you can directly contribute at Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee meetings.

#### **1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny**

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Community Services Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

#### **2. Questions from Members of the Public for Consideration at Scrutiny Committee Meetings and Participation at Meetings**

You can submit a question for consideration at a Scrutiny Committee meeting so long as the question you are asking is directly related to an item listed on the agenda. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it **no later than two working days before the meeting** to the Committee Officer. This will help to ensure that an answer can be provided at the meeting. Contact details for the Committee Officer can be found on the front page of this agenda.

Generally, members of the public will also be able to contribute to the discussion at the meeting. This will be at the Chairman's discretion.

(Please note that the Scrutiny Committees are not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

## **Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees**

### **Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing**

*Statutory functions for adult social services including:*

*Learning Disabilities*

*Strategic Housing*

*Supporting People*

*Public Health*

### **Children's Services**

*Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care.*

### **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

*Libraries*

*Cultural Services including heritage and tourism*

*Leisure Services*

*Parks and Countryside*

*Community Safety*

*Economic Development*

*Youth Services*

### **Health**

*Planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area*

*Health Improvement*

*Services provided by the NHS*

### **Environment**

*Environmental Issues*

*Highways and Transportation*

### **Strategic Monitoring Committee**

*Corporate Strategy and Finance*

*Resources*

*Corporate and Customer Services*

*Human Resources*

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**COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the meeting of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee held at WRVS Centre, Vicarage Road, Hereford on Monday, 17th October, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:** Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs. E.M. Bew, R.B.A. Burke, K.G. Grumbley,  
J.W. Hope MBE, R. Mills, Ms. G.A. Powell and P.G. Turpin

**In attendance:** Councillor Mrs. L.O. Barnett (Cabinet Member Social Care Adults and Health)

**10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mrs B Millman and Ms M James Voluntary Sector representatives.

**11. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were no named substitutes.

**12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**13. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June, 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**14. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY**

No suggestions were received.

**15. PERFORMANCE/BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006**

The Committee considered a report on performance and the budget.

The report stated that there were a number of areas where performance was not expected to meet the target. In part this was considered to be due to difficulties in data collection part way through the year and the ongoing difficulties of recording information using the client index system.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection had recently issued its draft performance assessment report following the Annual Review meeting in July 2005, which once finalised would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that an action plan for recovery was being prepared and that the financial implications of increasing performance would form part of the budget

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MONDAY,  
17TH OCTOBER, 2005**

planning process for 2006/07 linking to the Annual Operating Plan.

It was also reported that the Government Office for the West Midlands had assessed Herefordshire's Housing Strategy 2005-2008 as being fit for purpose, confirming that the Strategy identified the housing issues facing the County and that there were robust plans in place to address them. The Government Office would now work with the Council and monitor the achievement of outputs identified in the Plan.

In presenting the section of the report on the budget 2005/06 the Director of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing advised that there had been significant increases in the projected overspends on both the Social Care and Strategic Housing budgets as set out in the report. The projected social care budget overspend of £584,000 had now risen to £755,000, before the carry forward overspend of £714,000 from 2004/05 was taken into account. The projected overspend of £497,000 on the Strategic Housing budget had risen to £706,000, almost entirely owing to the cost of temporary accommodation for those presenting themselves as homeless.

The Director advised that demographics were driving demand for services, in particular for older people and those with a learning disability, placing increasing pressure on the social care budget. As the report showed these pressures were also impacting on performance.

In the course of discussion the following principal points were made:

- Concern was expressed about the consideration being given to forming a joint team comprising Welfare Rights staff and staff from the Department of Work and Pensions. It was suggested the concept was flawed. It appeared that no lead department had been appointed, no budget provision had been allocated and there were no terms of reference other than to provide advice to those aged over 60. There appeared to be a danger of replicating a service already available from the voluntary sector. It was proposed that a report on the issue should be made to the Committee.
- It was suggested that some of the issues presented as success stories in the report were as yet only proposals. It was requested that in future reports evidence of successes was provided.
- Concern was expressed about the Committee's ability adequately to scrutinise performance on the basis of the information currently being provided to it. It was noted that work was being carried out across the Council to enhance the reporting on performance management and link activity more clearly to financial resources. This would enable judgments to be made on what it would cost to achieve a particular level of performance and whether that was a realistic objective.
- In response to a question about performance against targets C29 and C30 (people with a physical disability and those with a learning disability helped to live at home) it was suggested that underperformance was attributable to the problems with data collection. The reasons for underperformance in relation to target C32 (the number of older people helped to live at home) were thought to be more complex and attributable in part to the proportion of wealthier older people in Herefordshire. This meant that performance against that target may be difficult to improve.

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MONDAY,  
17TH OCTOBER, 2005**

- Clarification was sought as to whether the ruling that some services were ineligible for support from the supporting people grant had contributed to the increased overspend on the social care budget. It was noted that the implications arising from the likely re-distribution of Supporting People Grant nationally suggested that Herefordshire could face a reduction of 5% per annum in Supporting People grant. This reduction in grant would be increased in real terms by virtue of the additional impact of no inflationary uplift being applied to the Supporting People grant each year.
- It was proposed that in view of the evident and unsustainable budget pressures the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) should be urged to make a careful reassessment of the budget with a view to establishing a realistic budget for 2006/07.

The Assistant County Treasurer commented that it is not easy to assess the budget for 2006/7 clearly at this point in time because there may well be, for example, new placements before the year end which could significantly affect 2006/7. The Adult Services Budgets were extensively reworked in the light of commitments at the start of each financial year.

**RESOLVED:**

- That (a) the report on performance and the budget be noted with concern;**
- (b) areas of concern continue to be monitored;**
- (c) in the light of the evident and unsustainable budget pressures on the adult social care and homelessness budgets in particular the Cabinet Member (Social Care, Adults and Health) be urged to make a careful reassessment of the budget with a view to establishing a realistic budget for 2006/07;**
- (d) a report be prepared on the proposed formation of a joint team comprising Welfare Rights staff and staff from the Department of Work and Pensions;**
- (e) a report be prepared illustrating the demographic pressures on services;**
- and**
- (f) clarification be provided on whether the rules governing expenditure from the Supporting People grant had had a bearing on the increased social care budget overspend.**

The meeting ended at 10.35 a.m.

**CHAIRMAN**





## **PERFORMANCE/BUDGET MONITORING 2005/2006**

**Report By: Performance Improvement Manager and Finance Manager**

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

1. To report the position on a selection of priority Performance Indicators and provide information about current performance management work within the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Divisions within the Adult and Community Services Directorate. An update will also be given on the budget monitoring position.

### **Financial Implications**

2. As contained in the report.

### **Background**

3. The Performance Management Framework of the Council requires reporting to Scrutiny Committee at 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 months. This reporting format has been produced to provide coverage and commentary about a selection of Performance Assessment Framework and Best Value Performance Indicators, many of which are included within the Corporate Plan and are reported in line with the Annual Operating Plan requirements. Issues, challenges and concerns relating to the Performance Indicators will be reported on an exception only basis, when activity levels are not in line with the planned targets.
4. The detail of the performance for each Service Block is given in the attached Appendices.

### **Overall Comment**

5. A number of Performance Indicators are not predicted to reach planned targets – this is partly due to the difficulties with data interrogation part way through the year and the ongoing difficulties of reconciling information using the CLIX system.

### **Other Performance Developments**

6. The final Report of Performance Assessment from the Commission for Social Care Inspection has recently been received, following the Annual Review Meeting in July 2005.

7. In response to the under performing indicators, a series of 'performance clinics' with the Divisional Management Teams have been established. Responsible managers will be allocated for the ten Adult Social Care indicators to instigate an action plan for recovery.
8. The financial implications of increasing performance will be scoped and will form part of the budget planning process for 2006/07, linking to the Annual Operating Plan.

## **Budget 2005/06**

### **Social Care**

9. The projected outturn for Social Care, reported to Cabinet on 17th November 2005, is an overspend of £780,000 in year, ie. before the carry forward overspend of £714,000 from 2004/05 is taken into account. There is a high risk that the overspend will increase to £905k as a result of placement where the funding is being disputed between local authorities.
10. The report to Cabinet on 19th May, 2005 set out the factors that led to an overspend on the social care budget in 2004/05. A further report on 23rd June 2005 on the 2005/06 budget set out the pressures on the budget. The most recent report to Cabinet on 17th November 2005, a copy of which has been circulated separately to Members of the Committee, advised Cabinet of the current budget position, the management action being taken and the implications this may have on service delivery.
11. There is evidence as reported to Cabinet that the overspend can be attributed to increased demand for services and the inability to deliver savings due to service pressures and legal requirements. This is particularly evident with Learning Disability services.
12. The budget and overspending brought forward from 2004/05 has not yet been disaggregated into Children's Services and Adult and Community Services components. This work is in progress.

### **Strategic Housing**

13. The projected outturn for Strategic Housing reported to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2005 indicated an overspend of £815,000. The overspend is owing to the cost of temporary accommodation for those people presenting themselves as homeless. This has previously been identified as a high risk area, subject to unpredictable demand.
14. The projection reflects further increases in the numbers presenting as homeless. For example the number of families with children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation increased to 47 as at 1<sup>st</sup> October compared with 33 at the end of July. There is a risk that if numbers continue to increase that the overspend would increase to £925k
15. The change manager to bring homelessness services in house is now in place, and two homelessness prevention officers have now been recruited.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT (a) the report on Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Performance and Budget be noted;**

**and**

**(b) areas of concern continue to be monitored.**


## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None



## (b) Appendix One – Adult Social Care

PAF	BVPI	Local Indicator	Definition	04-05 Out-turn	Target	Actual Quarter 1	Actual Quarter 2	Actual Quarter 3	Actual Quarter 4	Status
C28	53		Households receiving intensive home care per 1000 population aged 65 or over.	6.0	9.1	5.7				☹
C29			Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64.	4.3	4.2	N/A	3.2	-	-	☹
C30			Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64.	2.2	2.8	N/A	2.1	-	-	☹
C31			Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64.	2.8	3	N/A	3.3	-	-	☺
C32			Older people helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 65 or over.	65	80	N/A	52.4	-	-	☹
C51	201		Adults and older people receiving direct payments per 100 000 population aged 18 or over.	61	100	N/A	64.8	-	-	☹
C62			The number of carers receiving a specific carers' service as a percentage of clients receiving community based services.	1.8	2	N/A	1.8	-	-	☹
D54			Percentage of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven days	81	86	N/A	79	-	-	☹
D55	195		Acceptable waiting time for assessments (new older clients).	70	81	N/A	55	-	-	☹

E50		Percentage of assessments of adults and older people leading to a service	28	70	N/A	85	-	-	
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## Success Stories

Improvement in joint working with mental health services staff has resulted in improved reporting in activity.

There continues to be a performance management item in each monthly managers meetings to discuss indicators at risk and develop strategies to improve performance. Teams also have set targets which are monitored by the performance clinics attending by Head of Service.

CLIX team check panel results and then CLIX to make sure that teams have recorded the assessment and service, a spreadsheet is returned to the locality managers with the amendments required for CLIX highlighted. This has lead to improved reporting on indicator E50 above.

## Issues, Challenges and Risks

The inadequacy of CLIX system is now seriously hampering the ability to present accurate data to monitor performance.

A number of performance indicator targets are presenting challenges. Continuing budget pressures are making it difficult to achieve targets. Consideration of the cost of achieving planned targets is one of the key challenges. Changing demographics are also contributing to the difficulties. The Learning Disabilities Change programme has still to influence the helped to live at home indicators.

## Appendix Two – Strategic Housing

PAF	BVPI	Local Indicator	Definition	04-05 Out-turn	Target	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	Status
	64		Number of private sector dwellings returned to occupation	33	45	14	29	-	-	☺
	183a		Average length of stay for FWC in B&B	4	0	8.65	10.69	-	-	☹
	183b		Average length of stay for FWC in hostel accommodation	15	12	20	31.14	-	-	☹
	202		Number of people sleeping rough	0	0	0	0	0	0	☺
	203		% change in FWC in temporary accommodation compared to previous year	14.40%	0%	21.15%	23.76%	-	-	☹
	213		Number of homeless households where casework resolved situation	0	No target	0	0	-	-	
	214		% households accepted as homeless who have been previously accepted within last 2 years	0	2.00%	2.61%	2.23%	-	-	☹

## Success Stories

Following recent comments received from local residents relating to the undertaking of the local housing needs surveys a pilot two stage survey to see if the types of housing required could be identify more accurately.

Following recent consultation with private landlords regarding participation for the Rent/Deposit Scheme, the amount of funding to be provided is being increased to encourage more landlords to participate in the scheme to assist in reducing the level of Bed and Breakfast usage.

The success in bringing empty properties back into use is contributed by the close working relationship with the private sector housing team and maximising the assistance under the Major Works Assistance Grant funding scheme.

## Issues, Challenges and Risks

Bringing the Home Improvement Agency and the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service in house is a challenging opportunity over the forthcoming months.

A Planning Day has been arranged to discuss key aspects of service delivery including the setting of future performance indicators, how we can promote the service available more successfully, how we can improve our satisfaction surveys, what alternative services / improvements can be made and to provide more affordable housing



**HOMELESSNESS CONSULTATION EVENT - OUTCOME****Report By: Change Manager - Homelessness****Wards Affected**

County-wide

**Purpose**

1. To consider the outcomes of the homelessness consultation event held in October 2005 and the next steps.

**Financial Implications**

2. To be considered as part of the implementation of the review recommendations and within the transfer and reshape of homelessness and housing advice services from Herefordshire Housing Ltd to Herefordshire Council.

**Background**

3. The number of homelessness presentations and acceptances in Herefordshire has risen steadily since 2002, accompanied by a significant rise in spending on temporary accommodation.
4. Cabinet agreed a number of new financial and preventative measures to tackle homelessness in July 2005.
5. The Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee requested that a homelessness consultation event be held in October 2005, to include representatives from relevant agencies across the county.
6. The event focussed on tackling the main causes of homelessness in Herefordshire and explored opportunities for closer working arrangements in the future.
7. Summary notes from the consultation event have been circulated separately to Members of the Committee. The findings will be reported on at the meeting.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) be advised that:**

- (a) the establishment of a Homelessness & Housing Advice Steering Group comprising officers and key stakeholders would assist in the monitoring and development of prevention-focussed Homelessness & Housing Advice Services in Herefordshire;**
- (b) the Committee should be kept informed of progress on developments in homelessness prevention services and the work of the Homelessness & Housing Advice Steering Group after services are transferred back in-house**
- (c) the Council should continue to develop a preventative and reconciliatory approach to homelessness in partnership with other agencies;**
- (d) agencies should be encouraged to continue to work together to share information and develop an 'early warning' approach to homelessness;**
- (e) mediation and sanctuary options should be considered with young people and victims of domestic violence whenever appropriate;**
- (f) agencies should be encouraged to work closely with schools to prevent youth homelessness; and**
- (g) further work is undertaken to develop further potential in the private sector housing market.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Summary notes from the consultation event held on 17 October.

## JOINT TEAM WITH THE PENSION SERVICE AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Report By: Director of Adult & Community Services

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To note the development of a Joint Team with the Pension Service and Voluntary Sector to provide an integrated service for older people.

### Financial Implications

2. Financial efficiency savings through joint working have been identified.

### Background

3. The performance report presented to the Committee in October 2005 referred to the consideration being given to establishing a joint team structure with the Department of Works and Pensions – suggesting this would prevent duplicated work and release social worker time to deal with front line issues. Some concern was expressed at the meeting about the approach and it was requested that a report be prepared for the Committee on the matter.
4. The background to the formation of the Joint Team is contained in the report to Cabinet on 14th July, 2005, a copy of which is appended.
5. The report to Cabinet noted that a strategy produced by the Department of Work and Pensions in association with the Local Government Association, recognised that for too many older people services were difficult to access. The strategy promotes the development of a holistic, integrated service for older people, initially through the bringing together of the Pension Service, Local Authority and Voluntary Sector to form Joint Teams. These Joint Teams will provide a “one stop service” for customers and stop the duplication of activity across the different agencies. The aim of the Government is to achieve 100% of all local services to work in Joint Teams by March 2006. Currently 36 local authorities were working as Joint Teams.
6. Cabinet agreed in principle to a Joint Team approach being adopted and the creation of a project team with representatives from Herefordshire Council (Revenue and Benefits, Social Care and Economic Regeneration), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Voluntary Sector.
7. Joint Teams can deliver a number of benefits including:
  - Increase ability to contact and support the most vulnerable members of society
  - Increase net take-up of entitlements and services

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Stephanie Canham, Head of Social Care (Adults) on 01432 260320

- Reduce duplication of effort
- Enable customers to provide details of their personal circumstances only once.
- Improve the quality of life and independence of older people by intervening before the time of acute need.
- Provide an integrated service to today's and future pensioners.

## **Progress to Date**

8. Progress has been made as follows:
  - Agreement has been reached on the scope of services to be shared.
  - Access to each other's office locations.
  - Draft service level agreement, memorandum of agreement and service specification performance monitoring arrangements and data sharing protocol have been prepared.
  - The formation of the Joint Team Strategic Board. Members: Stephanie Canham Head of Adult and Social Care; Teresa Fullilove, Regional Manager, Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and Geoff Cole Head of Service. The Board will oversee the development of the Joint Team and ensure operational arrangements meet the strategic and performance aims of the organisations involved.
  - The formation of a Joint Team Implementation group. Members: Sue Dale, Adult and Social Care; Sue Wilce, Local Manager DWP; Susie Binns, Manager Revenue and Benefits; Pauline Hodges, DWP; Jean Howard, PCT; Zandra Pitt, Corporate and Customer Services, Geoff Tunstall, ABLE.
  - The model for joint working has been agreed. The Social Care financial assessment, welfare and housing benefits information-gathering functions will be included. A Gateway co-ordinator will screen and signpost customers to the Joint Team.
9. A pilot Joint Team is to be effective from the 1st December 2005 in order to identify issues prior to the finalising of the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreement. A staff member from Social Care financial assessment team and the housing benefit team will be based with DWP.
10. The Joint Team will be established in 2006 as a virtual team working towards a single location. The Joint Team approach will contribute to increased benefit take-up, as agreed in the LPSA2 target.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the report be noted subject to any comments Members might wish to make.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Cabinet Report – Joint Team -14<sup>th</sup> July 2005

## JOINT TEAM WITH THE PENSION SERVICE

### PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITIES:

### SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HOUSING CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

**CABINET**

**14TH JULY, 2005**

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### Wards Affected:

County-wide

### Purpose:

To approve the setting up of a 'Joint Team', an integrated partnership between the Department of Work and Pensions and the Council, potentially incorporating the Welfare Rights, Housing Benefit and Fairer Charging Teams.

### Key Decision:

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

### Recommendations:

- That (a) it be agreed in principle that the Joint Team approach be adopted; and
- (b) a project team be created with representatives from Herefordshire Council (Revenue and Benefits, Social Care, and Economic Regeneration), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Voluntary Sector.

### Reasons

This will enable Joint Team to support the local community to access benefits and entitlements including Pension Credits, carry out assessments on an individuals ability to contribute to the cost of social care and provide information and advice to meet the needs of older people and their carers.

Joint Teams can deliver a number of benefits including:

- increase our ability to contact and support the most vulnerable members of society.
- increase net take-up of entitlements and services
- reduce duplication of effort

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Geoff Cole, Head of Culture, Leisure and Education for Life  
Tel: (01432) 260721 Email: gcole@herefordshire.gov.uk

- enable customers to provide details of their personal circumstances only once.
- Improve the quality of life and independence of older people, by intervening before the time of acute need.
- provide an integrated service to today's and future pensioners.

## Considerations

1. Nationally, there is a demographic shift towards an ageing population – by 2021 there will be more people over 80 than there are children under 5. This situation is reflected locally with a significant and growing proportion of the county's population over 60 (currently 21%, but predicted to rise to more than 33% within ten years).
2. Research presented by the Audit Commission in the report "Older People Independence and Well Being", highlighted that income is a key factor in promoting independence. Additional income results in a greater level of physical independence, an enhanced sense of autonomy, greater social participation and engagement with their wider family and community, a strengthened sense of identity and enhanced dignity.
3. The Department of Health Green Paper, "Independence, Well-being and Choice", setting out the future of adult social care, recommends that a greater focus should be placed on preventative services, to allow for early targeted interventions, with an emphasis on preventing problems. It identifies the importance of economic well-being, with the ability to meet costs arising from specific individual needs. Having an adequate income depends on individuals being well informed as to the support they can access. This will be achieved through partnership working with the Council and Department of Work and Pensions, to develop new models of service delivery and the streamlining of assessments.
4. The Department of Health has launched the "Partnership for Older People Project" initiative, to invest in innovative projects that promote and sustain preventative work, in order to improve the physical and mental health, well-being and independence of older people. In partnership with the PCT and Voluntary Sector a bid has been submitted to create a 'prevention matrix'. This will involve the development of a range of prevention services, which will increase the number of people who are helped to live at home and reduce the number of emergency admissions to hospital care. The work of the Joint Team, will be an essential component of this prevention matrix.
5. "Link-Age", a strategy produced by the Department for Work & Pensions in association with the Local Government Association, recognises that for too many older people services are difficult to access. They have to contact different organisations and provide the same information and documents again and again, often at times of illness or crisis.
6. Link-Age promotes the development of a holistic, integrated service for older people, initially through the bringing together of the Pension Service, Local Authority and Voluntary Sector to form Joint Teams. These Joint Teams will provide a "one stop service" for customers and stop the duplication of activity across the different agencies.

7. The aim of the Government is to achieve 100% of all local services to work in Joint Team by March 2006. Currently 36 local authorities are working as Joint Teams
8. LPSA 2 has targets that relate to the uptake of some benefits by people over 60 years old and relate to the development of the Joint Team. These benefits are Pension Credits, Attendance Allowance and Council Tax Benefit.
9. Other relevant service developments and initiatives to be taken into consideration such as The Partners of Older People Project, Herefordshire Council Older People Strategy.
10. A Joint Team is an integrated partnership between The Local Pension Service and the local authority. It is dedicated to developing processes that reduce duplication and focus on improving the service to the customer. Members of the Joint Team are authorised via a Memorandum of Understanding to carry out administrative functions, such as information gathering and verification, on behalf of each of the partners and the Department of Work and Pensions. Joint teams can also seek to identify other needs the older person (or their carer) may have e.g. visiting officers could look to see whether an older person needed help with minor home repairs and signpost to an appropriate service.
11. Joint Teams include, as a minimum, all pensions Local Service Staff within the geographical area of the local authority as well as an appropriate staffing commitment from the local authority, namely Housing Benefits, Fairer Charging and Welfare Rights. It is also advisable to include representatives from the Voluntary Sector and other stakeholders such as the PCT. Management responsibilities come under a single board.
12. There is considerable flexibility to develop the Joint Teams in a manner which reflects local needs, and within Herefordshire it will be possible to draw on the good practice developed through the LPSA1 Signposting scheme, connecting older people to a variety of low prevention services.
13. The Project Team, in accordance with Prince 2 project management principles, will explore models for joint working, which will forge closing links between the agencies, allow for information sharing at a local level and the development of a single point of access to the service. The project team will draw up plans to manage, monitor and evaluate the change process. It is envisaged that the Joint Team is developed in stages, which will provide an opportunity for regular reviews and reports back to Cabinet, as and when appropriate.

## **Alternative Options**

To maintain existing working structures and practices. This would not result in service improvements or efficiency savings.

## **Risk Management**

To avoid adverse impact and disruption on other associated council services the process of developing a joint team must be managed incrementally and evaluation carried out throughout.

## **Consultees**

Department of Work Pension, ABLE, Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau.

## **Background papers**

None identified.