

A G E N D A

Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday, 2nd October, 2006**

Time: **10.00 a.m.**

Place: **The Council Chamber,
Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

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

For any further information please contact:

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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 K.G. Grumbley, J.W. Hope MBE, J.G. Jarvis, R. Mills,
Ms. G.A. Powell, R. Preece, D.C. Taylor, Mrs E.A. Taylor and P.G. Turpin

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of any Member nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on this Agenda.	
4. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th July, 2006.	1 - 6
5. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
6. BUDGET 2006/07 (TO FOLLOW) To report on the current budget position in Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing.	
7. ADULT SERVICES AND STRATEGIC HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING To report on the performance indicators position and performance management initiatives for the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Divisions within the Adult and Community Services Directorate.	7 - 14
8. SCRUTINY OF HOMELESSNESS To provide an update on progress with the implementation of the Recommendations resulting from the Scrutiny Committee Homelessness Consultation Event held on 17th October 2005. To review progress made in respect of homelessness prevention in Herefordshire and to consider any further related issues for scrutiny.	15 - 20

9. EVERY CHILD MATTERS TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE - SCRUTINY REVIEW	21 - 22
To consider and agree an approach to a short Scrutiny exercise to look at the Council's approach to transition issues for looked after children with special needs from childhood into adult life.	
10. ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME	23 - 26
To consider the Committee's work programme.	

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

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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 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.

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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

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Hereford on Wednesday, 26th July, 2006 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, K.G. Grumbley, J.W. Hope MBE, R. Mills,
Ms. G.A. Powell and P.G. Turpin

In attendance: Councillors Mrs. L.O. Barnett, T.M. James, W.J.S. Thomas and R.M. Wilson.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor R.B.A. Burke.

14. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P.G. Turpin declared a personal interest in agenda item 6: Learning Disability Service – Scrutiny Review.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June, 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

There were no suggestions from members of the public.

18. LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICE - SCRUTINY REVIEW

(Councillor P.G. Turpin declared a personal interest in this item.)

The Committee considered the final report of the scrutiny review of services for people with a learning disability.

An interim report had been presented to the Committee on 2nd June 2006 identifying emerging themes from the review which had been undertaken by the Committee as a whole. Following further discussions these had now been consolidated into recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health).

The Head of Adult Social Care presented the report commenting in detail on each of the recommendations.

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

- That the review had highlighted the scope to achieve efficiencies in the use of transport provided for service users, also recognising that the greater use of public transport would promote a more inclusive approach benefiting service users. The final review report needed to reflect this finding. It was noted that a review of social care transport was underway and that progress would be reported as part of any report back to the Committee on the Executive's response to the review.
- It was proposed that additional recommendations were needed to make explicit how the Committee would require the response to its recommendations to the Executive to be monitored.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) the findings of the review of services for people with a learning disability be approved for submission to the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) subject to additional text being added on the scope to achieve efficiencies in the use of transport provided for service users;**
 - (b) the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response;**
- and**
- (c) a further report on progress in response to the Review then be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.**

19. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme.

The current work programme was appended to the report.

The report noted discussions being held by the Strategic Monitoring Committee on how work programmes might better reflect Council-wide themes and issues identified as priority areas.

The Director of Adult and Community Services reported that following an informal meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee it had been suggested that in addition to focusing on the important theme of homelessness, the Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee should lead on the following key themes:

- **Every Child Matters** (examining matters including the transition from social care to adult life, the exchange of information between schools and social workers, whether plans being put in place with the Council's partners are working well in practice and whether the Council is fulfilling its corporate parent role?).
- **Older Peoples Strategy and Improving Adult Social Care** (examining whether the strategy is robust enough, how it fits with the Council's medium term financial Strategy, what the implications are for other services, and what is the view of

the assessments of adult social care needs and services that are being produced, including the wider implications for health services and housing.)

It was noted that the extensive work programme would require additional administrative support and considerable input from Members.

RESOLVED: That work proceed to develop and progress the work programme incorporating the key themes set out above.

20. BUDGET REPORT 2006/7

The Committee considered a report on the current budget position in Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing.

The report stated that the projected outturn for adult social care was an overspend of £3.4 million. Paragraph 3 of the report detailed the overspends on Learning Disabilities, Older People, Physical Disabilities, Mental Health and Service Strategy. It noted the consideration given to the adult social care budget by Cabinet on 29th June and the variations to the forecast budget position.

Changes to the risk sharing aspects of the Section 31 Agreements with the Primary Care Trust for 2006/07 were also referred to in the report. In the case of Mental Health this meant that any overspend relating to the Council's proportion of the mental health service expenditure would not be funded by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the whole risk would fall to the Council. In the case of the learning disabilities service the Council carried the full financial risk for the Council and PCT outturn position.

The Assistant County Treasurer commented that it was early in the financial year and drew attention to ongoing efforts to manage the overspend. He reminded the Committee that the findings of the analysis of adult social care needs and services were expected by the end of the Summer. Work to draw on the experience of high performing authorities was also continuing. The focus was on the longer term and the introduction of preventative measures which would reduce demand for services.

The projected outturn for Strategic Housing was an overspend of £83,000 although it was noted that if demand for temporary accommodation increased this would create pressures. Attention was drawn to the success of measures introduced to reduce the number of people presenting themselves as homeless.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- The findings of a recent internal audit of budget management in social care were welcomed. It was suggested that these findings demonstrated that the difficulties in the social care budget were not a result of poor financial management but were clearly a consequence of increasing demand for services. Concern was expressed that there had been undue delay in reaching this conclusion and that the restrictions on services as a consequence had had a detrimental impact. The position would not be remedied until priorities changed and resources for social care were added to the base budget.

It was noted that in October 2005 the Committee had urged that there should be a careful reassessment of the budget with a view to establishing a realistic budget for 2006/7. It was asked why at such an early stage in the 2006/7 financial year such a large overspend was projected.

It was also asked whether the projected overspend assumed that the contingency for social care which had been created as part of the 2006/07 budget had been spent.

The Director of Adult and Community Services replied that in 2005/6 Cabinet had felt itself to be faced with monthly reports showing ever-increasing overspends on the social care budget. The view had been taken that a different approach was needed and the figures presented to the Committee were assessed to be the worst case scenario. It remained the case, however, that the budget was volatile, with the potential for one service user with significant needs to incur significant expenditure.

The projected overspend did not take account of the £1.3 million contingency sum for social care established by the Council in setting the 2006/7 budget, £1 million of which was nominally earmarked for adult social care with the remainder for Children's Services. Allowing for these resources and management action the expectation was that the projected overspend would be reduced to about £2 million. In setting the budget for 2006/7 there had been an awareness of projected pressures but a balance had had to be struck by the Council given the constraints and pressures on the Council's budget as a whole.

- A question was asked about the unit costs of services and the extent to which these were used as a basis of comparison with other authorities. The Head of Adult Social Care confirmed that comparative unit costs were analysed. She reminded the Committee of the comparatively high unit costs in the County for the provision of services to people with a learning disability because of the disproportionate number of people in residential care. She outlined some of the knock on effects on the Council's finances because of the inability to claim certain benefits and the ineligibility for certain grants as a consequence.
- A question was asked about the forecast trends for the areas of overspend set out in paragraph 3 of the report. The Head of Adult Social Care replied that the Learning Disability budget was unpredictable. It was sensitive to the needs of individuals, some of which were very complex, and the prospect of a number of older carers ceasing to be able to act as carers was another factor. The overspend on the budget for older people could also increase given the demographic pressures within the County. The overspend on physical disabilities could increase for the same reasons as expenditure on older people. There was scope for change by reducing the amount of residential care and providing support in other ways. The right type of housing was needed to support this change and a housing strategy was being developed. In terms of mental health expenditure the proportion of people requiring care was increasing and the Council was working with the Primary Care Trust on the issues. The overspend on Service Strategy was not expected to increase.
- Concern was expressed about the consequences of setting thresholds for eligibility at too high a level. It was suggested that providing services at a lower threshold might enable preventative measures to be taken which in addition to being preferable for the person needing care would also be more cost effective.

In reply the Head of Adult Social Care said that the Council was not alone in setting a threshold whereby only those with critical and substantial needs were eligible for care. However, the need to move to an emphasis on preventative measures, reducing reliance on social care and encouraging greater independence was recognised. The findings of the analysis of adult social care needs and services would inform consideration of the options open to the

Council.

- The success of the prevention team within the homelessness section and the creation of a specific fund to help to prevent people going into temporary accommodation was welcomed.
- It was asked why there had been changes to the risk sharing aspects of the Section 31 Agreements with the PCT for 2006/7 for both Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, with what appeared to be an unfavourable outcome for the Council.

The Director commented that the risk sharing agreement had been changed because the Council had not been able to meet the additional level of investment required for the PCT to take the full risk. The social care contingency fund could be drawn on if necessary. Some pressures had been identified but it was still possible that these could be met through efficiency savings by the PCT and further negotiation.

The Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) said that she had pursued the matter during negotiations but unfortunately it had not proved possible to find the additional investment necessary.

Concern was expressed at what appeared to be a short-sighted approach, increasing the financial risk to the Council, and it was requested that a briefing paper on the Section 31 arrangements be circulated to every member of the Committee.

- In response to a question about the prospect of changes to the delivery of learning disability services generating savings in the current financial year the Director commented that whilst the majority of the expected savings would be achieved in future years it was expected that there would be some saving in the current year.
- It was noted that Mrs P Turvey (Social Services Accountant) who had dealt with social care finances for the Council and its predecessors for some 44 years had retired. The Committee recorded its thanks for such long service.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the report on the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing budget be noted whilst recording the Committee's concerns and emphasising the Committee's wish to keep the budget under continuing review;

and

(b) a briefing paper on the rationale for the changes to the risk sharing agreements with the Primary Care Trust for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities services be circulated to Members of the Committee.

ADULT SERVICES & STRATEGIC HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Report By: Improvement Manager

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To report on the performance indicators position and performance management initiatives for the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Divisions within the Adult and Community Services Directorate.

Financial Implications

2. No direct implications.

Background

3. The Performance Management Framework of the Council requires reporting to the Scrutiny Committee at 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 months. This report covers the end of year position, along with a selection of data available as at the end of June, 2006.
4. As outlined in previous reports to this Committee, the Department of Health (DH) publishes statistical information on the performance of all Adult Social Care Departments. There is a national set of 27 indicators covering Adult Social Care Services. The DH ranks performance in five bands ranging from Band 1 – “investigate urgently” to Band 5 – “very good”.
5. Strategic Housing performance is monitored by Best Value indicators and regularly reports to the Government Office of the West Midlands and the Department for Local Government and Communities.

Social Care

6. Of the 27 Adult Social Care indicators used to assess the performance of the Directorate none were in Band 1 and ten of the Performance Indicators (PIs) returned in the top two Bands for 2005-06.
7. The out-turn figures for 2005-06 represented a very positive step forward and were a reflection of the hard work in both Team Performance Appraisals and through the PI Champions clinics. Much work has been carried out to work with the operational teams to better understand how practice informs performance management, along with an injection of support to reconcile performance data contained on CLIX.
8. The detail of all 27 performance indicators is included as Appendix One.

Annual Review Meeting

9. The Annual Review Meeting (ARM) with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) took place on 6th September. The ARM is the meeting at which CSCI reviews our self-assessment data and PI out-turns and challenges and scrutinises the Council's practice and priorities for Adult Social Care. Based on CSCI's assessment from this meeting, Adult Social Care will be awarded a judgement as to how well we are serving the people of Herefordshire and what our capacity for improvement is, which in turn informs the Star Ratings.
10. The Council is currently rated as zero stars – Adult Social Care was judged to be serving **some** people well, with **uncertain** prospects for 2004-05.
11. A lot of hard work and effort went into preparing for the ARM this year, which enabled a realistic assessment of our strengths and areas for improvement.
12. As part of the preparations for the ARM a Record of Achievement (entitled Striving to Improve: Aspiring to be Excellent) was compiled for our Business Relationship Manager from CSCI – this presents a balanced and clear view of the Directorate's performance in 2005-06. The Record of Achievement includes within it a deal of benchmarking comparisons with our Institute of Public Finance family, many of which we compare favourably against. Copies of the Record of Achievement are available upon request.

Adult Social Care Improvement Plan

13. Good progress is being made to take forward the Department of Health sponsored Adult Social Care Improvement Plan. Interviews with consultants take place on 26th and 27th September to select partners to drive forward the five work-streams; Performance Data, Market Management, Workforce Planning, Fair Access to Care, and Fairer Charging.
14. The main thrust of the Improvement Plan will take place between October and January with all completed reports submitted by March 2007. A Project Board with both Member and Officer involvement has been established and project management arrangements are in place.

Herefordshire Connects

15. The Connects programme is progressing as planned and it is anticipated that a new electronic project management solution for Adult Social Care will be in place during 2008; this will enable replacement of the CLIX system. Until a new electronic solution is in place we will continue to reconcile records manually using CLIX Audit Clerks – this has and will continue to enable us to ensure the integrity and accuracy of data used for the PIs.

Service Planning

16. In line with the Corporate Planning process, work has commenced on the three-year Performance Improvement Cycle within the Directorate. This work will link directly to the Directorate, Divisional and Service Plans that will be developed during the next 2-3 months. A programme of work to ensure a fully joined-up approach to planning within the Directorate has already started and facilitated sessions are planned with each Head of Service and their Service Managers.

Strategic Housing

17. The detail of the housing indicators is shown in Appendix Two.
18. A new Performance Improvement Officer working specifically with Strategic Housing Performance data took up post on 8th May, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

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

and

(b) areas of concern continue to be monitored.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- **None identified**

Appendix One – Adult Social Care

PAF	BVPI	Local Indicator	Definition	Out-turn 05.06	Target 06.07	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Status
C28	53		Households receiving intensive home care per 1000 population aged 65 or over	5.7	7.5	N/A				
C29			Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64.	4.8	5.0	2.9				☹
C30			Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64.	2.5	2.8	2.2				☹
C31			Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64.	3.7	4	3.4				☹
C32			Older people helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 65 or over.	83.0	85	48.0				☹
C51	201		Adults and older people receiving direct payments per 100 000 population aged 18 or over.	80.0	100	66.3				☹
C62			The number of carers receiving a specific carers' service as a percentage of clients receiving community based services.	10%	10%	12%				☺
AO/D37			Availability of single rooms	88%	88%	88.4%				☺

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

2ND OCTOBER, 2006

PAF	BVPI	Local Indicator	Definition	Out-turn 05.06	Target 06.07	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Status
AO/D39			Percentage of people receiving a statement of their needs and how the	91%	98%	90%				☹
AO/D40			Client receiving a review	75%	75%	44.8%				☹
D54			Percentage of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven days	94%	94%	97%				☺
D55	195		Acceptable waiting time for assessments (new older clients).	70	85	96				☺
D56	196		Waiting time for Services	79	83	81				☹

Appendix Two – Strategic Housing

PAF	BVPI	Local Indicator	Definition	Out-turn 05.06	Target 06.07	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Status
	64		Number of private sector dwellings returned to occupation	54	50	9				☺
	183a		Average length of stay for FWC in B&B	10.65 weeks	0 weeks	18				☹
	183b		Average length of stay for FWC in hostel accommodation	29.3 weeks	12 weeks	12				☺
	202		Number of people sleeping rough	Less than three	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	☺
	203		% change in FWC in temporary accommodation compared to previous year	+26%	0%	-10.65%				☺
	213		Number of homeless households where casework resolved situation (measured per 1000 households)	0.93 (300 hseholds)	4	Not available				☹
	214		% households accepted as homeless who have been previously accepted within last 2 years	+2.88%	2%	1 repeat case				☺

Enabling Section

Successes

Enabling and Housing Needs have been in negotiations with developers on a number of S106 planning gain sites which will provide over 200 affordable homes.

Issues and Concerns

It is becoming increasingly noticeable that private landlords are reluctant to assist those households who are vulnerable and in receipt of benefits. These issues and concerns are to be addressed at the Private Landlords Forum.

Private Sector Housing

The HMO and Enforcement team continue to implement national HMO licensing and the transfer of all properties previously Registered into the national scheme.

The team are also adjusting to the new inspection and enforcement regimes also introduced this year.

The Government aim is to limit the number of enforcement notices served on landlords, to underline effective working partnerships between local authorities and landlords.

The team will, however, act in accordance with regard to the new enforcement policy and take appropriate action which includes a wide range of actions to deal with any hazards found within a property.

In addition the team are seeking compliance of all notices previously issued under earlier legislation as soon as practicable.

Homelessness

Progress on the number of units in temporary accommodation continues. At the beginning of September 2006 the number of families in Bed and Breakfast had fallen to 12. The number of families in Bed and Breakfast for more than 6 weeks has dropped to 2.

The number of homelessness applications and acceptances has continued to fall, and we are confident we will meet the 06/07 targets.

SCRUTINY OF HOMELESSNESS

Report By: Head of Strategic Housing

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To provide an update on progress with the implementation of the Recommendations resulting from the Scrutiny Committee Homelessness Consultation Event held on 17th October 2005. To review progress made in respect of homelessness prevention in Herefordshire and to consider any further related issues for scrutiny.

Financial Implications

2. Prevention-focussed Homelessness Services continue to contribute to a reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation with the result that budgetary risks have been greatly reduced.

Background

3. The number of households presenting and being accepted as homeless in Herefordshire rose steadily since 2002 reaching a high in 2004/05 of 719 applications and 510 acceptances.
4. In May 2005, Cabinet resolved that Homelessness and Housing Advice services should return in-house following Herefordshire Housing Limited's decision to withdraw from the agency agreement with affect from April 1st 2006.
5. In July 2005, Cabinet agreed a number of 'spend to save' initiatives and an improvement plan aimed at prevention of homelessness and eliminating the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
6. At the request of the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee, a homelessness consultation event was held on 17th October 2005, involving representatives from the Council and relevant agencies across the County. The event, which was held to facilitate the Committee's review of homelessness, focussed on exploring the main causes of homelessness in Herefordshire and considered opportunities for closer working arrangements in the future.
7. The outcomes of the October 2005 event were considered by this Committee on 2nd December 2005 and a series of recommendations were agreed for submission to the Cabinet Member for Social Care Adults and Health. A number of the recommendations endorsed the continuation of preventative approaches to tackling homelessness and this report provides an opportunity to update the Committee on progress with homelessness and invites consideration of further issues for review.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Richard Gabb, Head of Strategic Housing, on 01432 261902

8. Set out below are the minuted recommendations from the Social Care & Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting of 2nd December 2005.

“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 and it is recommended that Councillors K.G. Grumbley, and Ms G. Powell and Reverend Towner should be invited to serve on it;

(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;

(g) further work should be undertaken to develop further potential in the private sector housing market.”

Progress

9. In accordance with recommendation A at the meeting on 2nd December 2005, the Homelessness and Housing Advice Steering Group, comprising officers, key stakeholders and nominated Members of the Committee, agreed to assist in ensuring the development of prevention-focussed services within the County. The group has now met twice, and has provided helpful current advice about working practices, and the development of policy and procedures.
10. In accordance with recommendation B, officers will continue to update Scrutiny Committee on progress with homelessness in Herefordshire, a previous report having been provided on 17th March 2006.
11. In accordance with recommendations C and D, officers have continued to seek out further opportunities to develop prevention-focussed services and work in partnership with partner agencies in developing improved co-operation in tackling homelessness. Examples include a special meeting of the Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Forum held on 6th July 2006, comprising senior and executive officers of the Council’s main partners, to discuss improved co-operation around homelessness. At this meeting it was agreed that a homelessness protocol would be drawn up which would set out the role of each of the partner agencies in contributing to a prevention-focussed approach within the County. There have been some positive examples of co-operative working with challenging households, including early warnings of potential homelessness as a result of RSLs seeking possession of properties.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Richard Gabb, Head of Strategic Housing, on 01432 261902

12. Recommendation E centred on the need to consider the use of “Mediation” and “Sanctuary” options for young people and victims of domestic violence respectively. We can report the continuing success of mediation services being provided by Herefordshire Mediation. Although more rarely used, due to the specific criteria around whether the initiative is appropriate, sanctuary services are now an option for homelessness staff to consider for specific cases in consultation with Herefordshire Women’s Aid and West Mercia Police. More specifically, under the scheme, households living in fear of domestic violence from outside the home can in certain instances access the fitting of improved security measures to the home thereby reducing the risk of having to flee violence and present as homeless.
13. Recommendation F required agencies to work closely with schools to prevent youth homelessness. A school’s project has now been established in partnership between Strategic Housing, Children’s Services and SHYPP operated by Kemble Housing. Under this scheme, a project worker will visit local schools targeting children in year 10 with sessions aimed to fit into Citizenship Key Skills 4. The first school will be targetted during October/November 2006 with lessons learned informing sessions at other schools in early 2007.
14. Recommendation G proposed that further work be undertaken to develop further potential in the private sector housing market. The Rent Deposit Scheme administered by the Homeless and Housing Advice team continues to be one of the most successful routes of preventing homelessness, providing an opportunity for households to access the private rented sector, which has been traditionally resistant to assisting with the housing of homeless families and/or persons on benefit. A further piece of work is being undertaken to develop and launch a Landlord’s Accreditation Scheme within the County in a bid to encourage landlords to maintain high standards and work closely with the local authority. The Private Landlords’ Forum and Fair continue to provide an excellent opportunity to interact with private sector landlords in the County. The Landlords’ Forum, held on 20th September 2006, included a briefing and discussion on the proposed Landlords’ Accreditation Scheme and a proposal to establish a working group, including landlords, to establish the mutual requirements and benefits from such a scheme.
15. The minutes of the meeting dated 2nd December 2005 proposed that the Cabinet Member for Social Care Adults and Health be advised of the recommendations set out in the report
16. The Cabinet Member has agreed that the outcomes from the consultation event should be considered by the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group when it commences its review of the action plan of Herefordshire’s Homelessness Strategy, and contributes to the development of the West Housing Market Area Homelessness Strategy, in partnership with our neighbouring authorities in Shropshire.
17. The last Homelessness Update to Scrutiny Committee, dated 17th March 2006, reported on early progress being made into homelessness prevention in Herefordshire. Two FT officers had been employed in January to tackle this issue, prior to the scheduled transfer back in-house of the Homelessness and Housing Advice team from Herefordshire Housing Ltd in April 2006.
18. As reported in the March 2006 update, the number of successful homelessness prevention interventions at that time stood at 25, representing a cost of £5000, while

the number of families being placed in B&B stood at 7 per month. The total number of families in B&B in March 2006 stood at 44.

19. Homelessness & Housing Advice staff transferred back in-house in April 2006, and the team was reshaped to increase the number of homelessness prevention officers working to reduce temporary homelessness levels and the use of B&B.
20. To date, from when the fund was initially set up in October 2005, the number of homelessness prevention payments now stands at 550, (including repeat sustainment payments) representing a cost of £101,000. The Council has implemented a repayment scheme to enable the authority to recuperate as much of this spend as possible. However, these payments represent a substantial saving against the likely B&B costs had these households not been helped through the Prevention Fund.
21. Broadly speaking, the nature of these prevention payments breaks down further as follows:
 - Accessing private rented sector - 50%
 - Tenancy sustainment - 15%
 - Preventing family exclusions - 25%
 - Domestic violence - 10%
22. The number of new families booked into B&B now averages 2 per month, and there are currently only 11 families in B&B, a considerable improvement on the high of 55 reported in January 2006.
23. The number of homelessness applications and acceptances has reduced significantly through prevention. These are currently in the region of 35 acceptances per quarter, which is below the target set for acceptances in 2007/08 and this reflects positively by comparison to neighbouring authorities.
24. The proportion of lettings going to homeless individuals and families, as a proportion of all lettings, has also reduced - from 43.8% in 2003/04 to 28% in 2005/06. This should result in an increased number of lettings to other banded groups within the Home Point system and is broadly similar to neighbouring authorities and below South Shropshire District Council.
25. The Homelessness Advisory Steering Group has met twice since April 2006. Feedback on services is generally positive, and requests for clear policies and procedures around homelessness prevention have been acted upon - these are due out by the end of December.

Future Issues

26. The Homelessness & Housing Advice Service has now been operational 'in-house' for six months and during that time progress has been evidenced in both homelessness levels and B&B usage with the associated budgetary risks reduced.
27. The continual scrutiny of this area will assist in monitoring and assessing the sustainability of the identified improvements in the long term. Issues which will need to be kept under review include:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Richard Gabb, Head of Strategic Housing, on 01432 261902

- The extent to which the Council, in partnership, is able to locate re-housing opportunities for the most challenging and socially excluded households in Herefordshire.
- Continuing to encourage the public and partner agencies to see early homelessness prevention as a viable alternative to homelessness applications
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available to enable the homelessness and housing advice team to continue to respond to the local demand for services
- Tackling the high level of debt-driven homelessness in the County, and addressing the blocks subsequent arrears create in terms of future housing option
- Ensuring homeless households use the Home Point system appropriately and proactively
- Tackling the increasing number of Notices to Quit issued in the private sector
- Continuing to engage sensitively with lettings agents and estate agents in the County
- Addressing the impact of the financial gap between housing benefit levels and actual market rents in Herefordshire
- Ensuring the supply of affordable housing meets local demand in a constantly changing housing market

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT**
- (a) the updated position be noted;**
 - (b) the Committee is kept informed of progress and developments in homelessness prevention and the work of the Homelessness & Housing Advice Steering Group;**
- and**
- (c) the Committee considers options for further review.**

Background Papers

None.

EVERY CHILD MATTERS – TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE – SCRUTINY REVIEW

**Report By: Director of Children's Services and Director of
Adult and Community Services**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider and agree an approach to a short Scrutiny exercise to look at the Council's approach to transition issues for looked after children with support needs from childhood into adult life.

Background

2. In considering the future work programme for Scrutiny Committees, the Strategic Monitoring Committee considered a discussion paper at its meeting on 26th June, 2006 outlining a number of possible items for the scrutiny programme over the next year.
3. One of the areas identified for further Scrutiny was the issue of Every Child Matters and in particular the transition from leaving care to adult life. It was suggested that the Scrutiny Review would look at the exchange of information between schools and Social Workers, to consider whether plans had been put in place with the Council's partners, how those would work in practice and to confirm that the Council was fulfilling its Corporate Parent role.
4. It was agreed that the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee would lead on this piece of work, working with Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. This Committee incorporated this work into its work programme on 26th July 2006.

Considerations

5. There are a whole range of potential outcomes for looked after children, some of whom will continue to have a special need or support needs but for many there are a whole range of other outcomes that would be appropriate. Issues that need to be considered include suitable housing, suitable individual person centred plans which consider employment and training and a whole range of other options which provide a full range of life opportunities for those individuals.
6. There is a useful guide to the education of looked after children and the role of Scrutiny Committees which has been produced by the Improvement and Development Agency. This provides some guidance on useful questions that might be used as part of the Scrutiny process.

7. In order to take this piece of work forward it is suggested that three Members are nominated from the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee to work alongside three nominated Members from the Children's Scrutiny Committee. The Sub-Committee formed should use the guidance from the IDEA as a framework for its work.
8. It is suggested that a short Scrutiny exercise could be conducted, focusing on one meeting where key partners are invited to give evidence. Support for this process will be provided by Shaun McLurg, Head of Safeguarding & Assessment Services, Children's & Young People's Directorate.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT (a) the Committee endorses the approach to the Scrutiny review set out in this report;**
- and**
- (b) three Members be nominated to serve on the Review Group.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Report By: **Chairman, Adult Social Care and Strategic
Housing Scrutiny Committee**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

- 1 To consider the Committee's work programme.

Financial Implications

- 2 None

Background

- 3 In accordance with the Scrutiny Improvement Plan a report on the Committee's current Work Programme will be made to each of the scheduled quarterly meetings of this Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the current Work Programme, last considered by the Committee in July 2006, is attached at appendix 1.
- 4 The programme has been modified by me as Chairman following consultation with the Vice-Chairman and the Director of Adult and Community Services in response to changing circumstances. Members are reminded that guidance for developing an effective work programme is contained in the Scrutiny Handbook previously issued to Members.
- 5 The item elsewhere on this agenda on homelessness is likely to generate additions to the programme.
- 6 Should any urgent, prominent or high profile issue arise, as Chairman I may consider calling an additional meeting to consider that issue.
- 7 Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact either myself as Chairman or the Vice-Chairman to log the issue so that it may be taken in to consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comment or issues raised by the Committee the Committee work programme be approved and reported to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2006/07

December 2006	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Performance Monitoring (including the Adult Social Care improvement Plan) • Process for providing minor adaptations to properties • Executive's Response to Review of Learning Disability Services • Older Peoples Strategy (including assessment of needs and services)
Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Child Matters – Transition to Adult Life
March 2007	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Performance Monitoring (including the Adult Social Care improvement Plan)
Other issues to be Progressed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness 	

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required

