

MINUTES of the meeting of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday, 3 October 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor PA Andrews (Chairman)
Councillor WLS Bowen (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: ME Cooper, H Davies, BA Durkin, AE Gray, KG Grumbley,
MD Lloyd-Hayes, PM Morgan and JE Pemberton

Co-opted Member Mr R Kelly (Voluntary Sector Representative)

In attendance: Councillor PJ Edwards

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors MJ Fishley and RV Stockton.

71. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

73. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

There were no suggestions from the public for future scrutiny.

75. PRESENTATION BY THE CABINET MEMBER (SOCIAL CARE ADULTS)

The Head of Transformation provided a presentation on behalf of the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults).

The Committee received a presentation on behalf of the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults). The Head of Transformation highlighted the following areas in particular:

- That Herefordshire had been judged in 2007 by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to be a one star Authority with uncertain prospects for improvement – one of only 6 local authorities in this position. As a result, there were a number of areas that had to be addressed:
 - Leadership and Direction in the context of increasing demand
 - Budget Management
 - Modernising Services

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- Strengthening integrated commissioning with the Primary Care Trust
 - Involvement of users and carers
 - Assessment and care management
 - Delivering the Learning Disability Improvement Plan
- That Herefordshire had one of the most dispersed populations in England, with 0.8 people per hectare, and with a net influx of older people. It was forecast that there would be a 100% rise in the number of people over 85 by 2026.
 - There was a significant trend of rising demand for services. Numbers of clients in community care were rising, whilst the number of those in residential care was falling.
 - Leadership and management achievements for the year included:
 - improved communication through newsletters, Directors conferences and training
 - Increased management capacity
 - Increased investment and better value for money
 - Improved Business planning processes implemented through service and team plans
 - The investment in the new IT system, Frameworki, which would provide new information for the Service, and would help to drive the work flow.
 - Better control of budgets had meant that the out-turn for 2007-08 had resulted in an underspend of £153k. The Directorate was determined to maintain this performance in the future.
 - The Signposting scheme had been successful, with 40 agencies involved in the initiative. There had been 3480 referrals which had helped to reduce the amount of duplication between the agencies involved.
 - New Services were being developed that had meant that intermediate care service staff could be more effectively utilised by using internet based services when patrolling their areas as a roving night service.
 - The changes meant that there was an 18% increase in non-residential intermediate care, and that 111 additional carers were now supported. There were 138 people with individualised budgets, allowing them to live more independently. There was a target of 10% of adult service users who would receive these budgets in 2008/09.
 - Integrated commissioning had been strengthened, and the Directorate was working with The Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme to introduce an integrated commissioning structure across the Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

The Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults) thanked the Head of Transformation for the presentation. She reported that the CSCI inspection had taken place on 21 July, and that recommendations from this would be received later in October.

The Cabinet Member outlined a number of challenges before the Service:

- A good start had been made with the Improvement Programme, but that this would need to be sustained. Evidence would need to be produced that what was being done was beneficial to the community.
- The rising numbers of over 85 year olds. This was a situation easier to deal with in an urban context, but harder in rural areas.

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- There was a financial challenge, as there was no contingency available, and the base budget would have to be balanced in the current year.
- The operation of the new IT system would be challenging, and there would doubtless be issues to deal with in the first few weeks.
- The Modernisation Agenda had taken off, but the transformation would take some time. Staff would be more stabilised, but there was a problem of low morale as a result of the recent changes. The implementation of permanent contracts and posts would make a difference to this situation.
- There were problems with the position of carers, and there was still progress to be made to help individuals in the community.

She added that the role of Scrutiny was very important, and she congratulated all members of staff in the Directorate for their efforts in improving the service.

The Director of Integrated Commissioning reported that the situation had moved very rapidly over the last 12 months. The CSCI meeting had shown how much change had been achieved. There was a good opportunity to build upon this as the team was being put together. The benefits of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Council integration had to be made material in the area of Adult Social Care. There was an opportunity to address funding issues as well as funding responsibilities. A fundamental debate was required as to how resources were allocated.

In reply to a question, the Improvement Manager reported that Performance Indicator D55 (Acceptable waiting time for assessments), had stood at 92%, and that assessments were undertaken within 48 hours. Services were delivered within 28 days of the assessment. The Head of Transformation added that the indicator had fallen as it was not possible to record delivery of the service until all the individual parts of the care package had been received. The indicator could therefore give a false impression of the state of the service.

The Head of Transformation confirmed that Village Wardens were appointed by the Council. She concurred with the view that local shopkeepers should be utilised wherever possible, and said that the Council did already deliver day care opportunities through pubs and post offices in order to help support villages.

A Member requested that consideration be given to appointing a Member of a Scrutiny Committee to the Integrated Commissioning Board.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for her presentation.

76. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2008/09

The Committee noted a paper on the final outturn position for 2007-08 and the projected outturn position for 2008-09 for the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Services.

The Management Accounts Manager reported that the forecast outturn position for Adult Social Care had improved significantly. The main reason for the change was that projections now assumed that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) would meet the costs of individuals meeting the Continuing Health Care criteria, which amounted to £942k.

He went on to say that, as part of the requirement to stay within cash limited allocations, a number of savings had been identified within Learning Disabilities and a potential contribution of £158k from Supporting People had also been included in

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the projection. The overall impact of all the changes was a reduction in the forecast overspend from £1.248m to £331k.

The Management Accounts Manager reported that the forecast outturn position for the Strategic Housing Service had improved significantly since July, as the overspend had reduced from £697k to £312k. The projected cost of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation had been calculated on a number of scenarios. A prudent view, based on a number of factors, meant that it was likely that there would be an overspend of £312k.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Head of Strategic Housing Services said that the global economic downturn had had a detrimental effect on homeless numbers. Loans could be provided with 0% interest in order to get the home owner out of their immediate predicament, but the Service did also negotiate with banks and building societies on behalf of clients. Homeowners could be placed in touch with Housing Associations to allow them to make use of schemes that would permit the housing association to buy a house and rent it back to the owners. The various initiatives practiced by the Service had been in place for several years, and had been cited as best practice by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

He went on to say that there had been a greater focus on customer services, improving the decision tiers within the Service, and focusing on issues that needed to be addressed within the Service. This had previously been a reactivate process, but progress was being made. He added that there were currently 13 families in bed & breakfast accommodation, but that this situation was being improved upon. The Service was actively sourcing private sector housing to be included in the private sector leasing scheme. The scheme was cost neutral as far as was possible. It was noted that there were targets in place to ensure that vacant properties were put back into use.

In reply to a further question from a Member, the Head of Strategic Housing Services said that the Homelessness Team looked at the eligibility of an applicant based on their rights to access public funds, immigration criteria, and whether the applicant was homeless, or likely to be homeless within the next 28 days. Negotiations would be undertaken with landlords or family to try and help find ways to allow the individual to stay in the house; paying rent arrears for example. The Team would consider the situation of individuals who were in temporary accommodation, and would look at whether they had intentionally become homeless as a result of prioritising other spending above rent or mortgage arrears. Once all possible avenues had been considered, then accommodation would be provided. Better communication was required, and the Team were focusing on this as a priority. He invited Councillor Davies to spend a day shadowing the work of the team in order to see how the service was run and to understand the pressures that it was under. Such a role would also help the Service to improve.

The Head of Strategic Housing Services replied to a further question from a Member by saying that the Property Services were looking into the future of Elmhurst, and that the building was being used as temporary office accommodation for members of the Adult Social Care Service.

In reply to a query regarding multiple occupancy houses, he concurred that these could cause problems, but pointed out that they were a useful way of housing people. There was a registration scheme in place which allowed the Council to prosecute landlords who used their properties illegally for this purpose.

The Head of Strategic Housing Services went on to say that a Senior Prevention Officer was being appointed to augment the team, but that all members of staff were

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carrying high case loads. The Intermediate Care Manager was leaving the Council, and would be acting as a Special Adviser for the CLG for three months.

Resolved:

- That**
- a) the forecast outturn for 2008/09 agreed with the Directors based on service and financial performance outlined in this report be noted;**
 - b) the continuing efforts of the Directors to ensure service targets are met within the approved budget be endorsed;**
 - c) an improved forecast of outturn for the 2008/09 financial year be reflected in the next financial monitoring report;**
- and;**
- d) that the increased demands on the Strategic Housing Service as a result of a rise in homelessness should be reflected in budget and staff allocations.**

77. ADULT SERVICES AND STRATEGIC HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Committee noted the report on the performance indicator position and other performance management information for the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Divisions within the Adult and Community Services Directorate. The following areas of consideration were highlighted by the Improvement Manager:

- Of the 17 indicators for Adult Social Care with the latest position data, there were 10 PIs that were on target or better, three which were rated as amber and four highlighted as red. Thirteen PIs were performing better than the 2007-08 position.
- There were improvements in indicators C31, C62, C72, C73 and D40 which were all likely to exceed the targets set. D55 (Assessments) and D56 (Waiting time for care packages) were both behind the desired target, but it was likely that the targets would be achieved.
- PIs E47 and E48 indicated that no one from the Black and Minority Ethnic community had been assessed in year to date, largely because no one in this category had come forward. There was an argument that the Service wasn't reaching these communities and, as a result, greater emphasis would be put on them within the public information strategy. The only way of monitoring the success of the campaign was whether or not there was an increase in the number of service users from these groups.
- The Annual Review Meeting had taken place on 21st July. It was based on a series of focus group discussions with staff, members and other stakeholders. A draft copy of the Performance Assessment Notebook had been received from the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The final version would be due by the end of October.
- The most recent user involvement activity was a satisfaction survey of people who used residential or nursing care provision. 131 responses had been received, of which 72.5% said they were extremely/very satisfied with the standard of care and 81.7% said they felt safe. 67.2% said that they were extremely/very satisfied with the meals that they were provided with. Sixteen user involvement sessions had been delivered across the County with more than 100 people attending. The events would help to inform a joint Council

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and Primary Care Trust Involvement Strategy. The findings from the events would be published during October, with the first draft of the Strategy available by the end of the year.

- The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and Evidence Portfolios were now implemented internally, with plans in place to extend the QAF to the independent sector. Herefordshire had recently been recognised by authorities in Wales as a trail blazer in this field.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Improvement Manager said that whilst the Local Area Agreement would supersede a number of PIs, the six reported from Adult Social Care would remain, and a broader range of indicators would be reported to the Committee in the future. The new indicators were prefixed by NI, and there were a total of 198 across the Council. There would be 35 PI's in the Local Area Agreement in order to monitor the progress of the Adult Social Care Directorate.

The Director of Joint Commissioning said that he would produce a paper for the next meeting of the Committee on how the PI's were made up. He also undertook to provide a briefing on the Comprehensive Area Agreement which would be in place shortly.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the report on Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Performance be noted

and;

(b) areas of concern continue to be monitored.

78. UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED FAIRER CHARGING POLICY

The Committee noted an updated report on the implementation of the revised fairer charging policy. The Joint Team Manager (Welfare & Financial Assessments) reported that the income from non-residential care packages was falling short of the projection that had been provided to Cabinet in October 2007. It had been anticipated that an additional sum of £400k would be achieved. The review of the first quarter had resulted in a reduced forecast of £244,400. The annual shortfall was therefore likely to be in the region of £156k.

Areas for change had been identified in the Fairer Charging Policy document following its implementation. These included Charitable Income and the treatment of War Pensions. Both of these sources of income would now be disregarded in full when people were applying for, or receiving, care packages or when council tax was being considered. The policy also needed to clarify current practice with Individualised Budgets so that service users were made aware that they would still be assessed under the current fairer charging policy in order to establish any contribution to be collected from an individual budget, whether it was arranged by direct payment or whether the Council purchased the services on the service users behalf.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the report on the Revised Fairer Charging Policy be noted

and;

(b) areas of concern continue to be monitored.

**79. UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW INTEGRATED SOCIAL CARE
RECORD SYSTEM**

The Committee noted a progress report on the implementation of the new integrated social care record system. The Head of Transformation reported that the project was progressing well, and it was anticipated that it would go live on the scheduled date of 10th November. Staff were receiving field training in the new system, and there was an E-sandpit to allow them to try out their new knowledge. A system of super users had been set up who would be the first port of call for the teams. They would be supported by Champion users, and finally a Central Support network. These measures were necessary as there would be no user support from Corelogic two weeks after the system had gone live.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a report on the effectiveness of the new integrated social care record system be provided to the Committee in six months time.

80. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme. The work programme at Appendix 1 was noted.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be approved and recommended to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN