

MINUTES of the meeting of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Brockington on Thursday, 24 July 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: ME Cooper, H Davies, BA Durkin, MJ Fishley, AE Gray,
KG Grumbley, MD Lloyd-Hayes, JE Pemberton and RV Stockton

In attendance: Councillors WU Attfield, LO Barnett, TM James, JG Jarvis, G Lucas,
SJ Robertson, WJ Walling and JB Williams

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received From Mr R Kelly, Voluntary Sector representative.

57. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

59. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7 April were noted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th April, 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to noting that Councillors Gray, Grumbley and Fishley were present at the meeting.

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

Mr David Mason and Mr Brian Blunt, representing the Canal Road Day Centre User Group, expressed concern regarding issues that had been raised in several letters sent to the Council regarding the use of the Day Centre facilities by the Herefordshire Carer's Hub. The matter was dealt with under Item 13.

61. PRESENTATION BY THE CABINET MEMBER (ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING)

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing presented his report.

The Cabinet Member took the Committee through his report, and highlighted the following areas in particular:

- That the service had two key targets against which performance was monitored.

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The first of these was the provision of affordable homes, and against a target of 220 affordable homes (built or acquired) only 141 had been achieved during the year. This was largely as a result of the delay in receiving planning application approval; a result of the poor quality of some of the applications, which meant that Planning Committees had turned them down. The Chairs of the Housing Associations had been urged by the Head of Planning and Transportation to ensure that all applications were correctly finished before submission. The majority of affordable homes provided were through grant funding.

- The second key target was against the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 64: Number of empty properties brought back into use as a result of direct action of the local authority. Against the target of 110, 112 properties were brought back into use during 2007/08. This was an increased target from 45 in 2006/7 as a result of the reintroduction of the rent/deposit scheme that could be used to assist homeless families into the private rented sector where properties had been empty (there were 67 properties during 2007/8).
- The Cabinet Member went on to say that there were a number of Key Achievements for the Service in 2007/08. The first of these was positive working with the Learning Disability Service in order to identify eighteen new homes in the community to support independent living with floating support. Work had also been undertaken with the Supporting People Team to ensure that funding was available for floating support services to maintain independent living for vulnerable client groups. As a result, there were no care leavers in bed & breakfast accommodation after leaving care. A member pointed out that it should be borne in mind that single parent families needed multiple room accommodation, as did live-in carers.
- The Cabinet Member reported that a more focussed approach for Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partners to increase the delivery of affordable housing across the County had involved the Parishes in identifying four sites for development. A member remarked that planning applications were increasingly seen with numbers of units under the level that required social housing provision in their first phase. These developments then rolled out a subsequent phase that took them over the level, but avoided the requirement for social housing by phasing the development. It was noted that RSLs were competing in the North of the County for affordable houses in developments, so it was important that a dialogue should be entered into with them. The Housing Corporation were seeking efficiency savings across build programmes and this has had a direct impact on the rural schemes. Grant rates were required in the region of £50k per rented unit where previously RSLs were seeking levels of £70k.
- The Director of Regeneration said that there was a significant number of homeless in Herefordshire, and the Service was now seeing professional people coming forward with problems. There were a number of people in temporary accommodation, but the Council had resisted putting up vulnerable cases in such lodgings.
- The Cabinet Member reported that the West Housing Market Area Assessment, as well as the assessment of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, had been completed.
- The Cabinet Member went on to say that there were a number of key challenges for 2008/11 that faced the Council. The National Indicator for new homes built or acquired had stretched targets to reach a total of 350 homes in 2010/11, up from 200 in 2008/09. This would have to be delivered at a time when current financial

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market had seen many national house builders withdraw from delivering key strategic sites which would affect the delivery at local level. Whilst the target for 2008/9 was considered achievable, future years would be challenging.

- In reply to a question from a Member, the Director of Regeneration said that there were no plans at this stage for a homelessness hostel in the City. Government guidance was that temporary accommodation should be disposed of in favour of sufficient permanent provision.
- The key activities for 2008/09 included the implementation of the Key Worker Policy and what this would mean for the County, the implementation of intermediate rental policy as an incentive to bring empty properties back into use, and a Rough Sleepers Count which would incorporate a hidden homeless count. As the Gypsy & Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment had been finalised, the Council would now need to meet the needs that had been identified.
- The Edgar Street Grid Regeneration would maximise the opportunities for affordable housing across the site, and over a 1000 houses were planned for the area. It would also ensure that the urban village delivered a range of housing choices to meet the needs of Herefordshire.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for his report.

RESOLVED: That a report on current homelessness figures should be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, with an indication of how the Council's Strategy on Homelessness was dealing with the situation.

62. REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2007/08 AND THE BUDGET 2008/09 (TO FOLLOW)

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 Accounting Manager reported that the final position for the Strategic Housing Service was an overspend of £33k. The overspend had been predicted, and masked an additional overspend on the homelessness budget of £140k. This was an issue that had been increasing throughout the year, and had been offset by one-off savings which had resulted from grant funding and staff vacancies.

He went on to say that there were £4m of additional funds available from a variety of sources for the Adult Social Care budgets for the current year. This meant that there was an opportunity to refresh the budgets in order to support the service change agenda. The year end projection for the Service showed an overall projected overspend of £1.58m. It was expected that this position would be corrected, and that Adult Social Care would achieve a balanced budget for 2008-09.

The Interim Director of Adult Social Care reported that the budget had been brought into line whilst four hundred additional users had received services. Care had been provided in new and different ways, and the numbers in residential care had fallen, whilst those receiving care at home had risen. Needs analysis had been undertaken to support the development of new services. A pilot project addressing the needs of those with intermediate mental health issues would be rolled out across the County. There were ongoing discussions with the PCT concerning the implementation of

recent guidance on eligibility for continuing healthcare. This linked to the revenue issue, which did not concern the transfer of funds between the Council and the PCT, but was more a question of who would ultimately have responsibility for care. In reply to a question from a Member, she went on to say that there was an assessment process that would have to be gone through in order to ensure that the users in question were suitable for continuing care, and that there had been a delay in finding available staff to carry out these assessments. No timetable to finish the process was yet in place.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Interim Director of Adult Social Care reported that there had been a positive response to the Council's bid for funding from the Department of Health, and she fully expected that the anticipated funding of £141k outlined in item 5 would be realised.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Interim Director of Adult Social Care said that Herefordshire Connects would be the key to improving the efficiency of the staff, and would therefore assist with managing the budget.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and commented on the projected outturn for financial year 2008/09 for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing.

63. 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:

- That Internal Audit has carried out five audits in relation to Strategic Housing, and that the previously audited areas had shown an improvement, whilst those that had not been audited before were deemed as being satisfactory.
- That the official launch of the Quality Assurance Framework and Team Evidence Portfolios had taken place on 25th June. Thirty internal teams had been represented at the event and initial feedback was positive. Thirty six Portfolios had been allocated to teams or individual managers. The Evidence Portfolios would be considered at routine Team Performance Appraisals and would be used to inform peer review sessions at the Performance Champions Clinics throughout the year.
- The DVD project to promote Adult Social Care Services across the County was progressing well and the final version of the disc had been produced. A launch event to promote the DVD and the work that took place in Herefordshire was planned for Thursday 4th September at the Courtyard. A booklet was also being produced to accompany the DVD which would set out the range of services offered by Herefordshire Council.
- The Improvement Manager reported that end of year out-turns for the performance indicators for Adult Social Care showed that sixteen indicators had performed better than the 2006-07 position. Whilst only six indicators had achieved target, seven others had missed target by very small margins. He added that these had all been deliberately set as stretch targets.
- That there was a national set of indicators covering Adult Social Care Services,

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published by the Department of Health. Performance was ranked in five bands, known as 'blobs', and ranged from Band 1 – "investigate urgently" to Band 5 – "very good". The bands were highlighted in the out-turn information. In two of these, C72 and D54, the Council's service was rated as one of the top six in the Country. D40 and D55 had been praised by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

In the ensuing discussion, the following principle points were made:

- That the good news reflected in the results for the year should be mentioned in *Herefordshire Matters*.
- That whilst the PI D54 (equipment delivered within seven days) remained in the top banding, not all equipment delivered within the period was installed within the time frame. The PI was targeted at delivery of the equipment. The Interim Director of Adult Social Care added that a new van and driver had been enlisted into the Equipment Services, and improvements would be made to the delivery and fitting of equipment. A self-assessment scheme would also be introduced that would allow people to assess their own needs for simple equipment. This would also help to reduce the backlog of individuals awaiting assessment by Occupational Therapists for aids over £2k in value.
- In reply to a Member's question, the Interim Director of Adult Social Care reported that initial feedback from the CSCI Annual Review had shown significant improvement in the Service. Assessment of Care Management had shown that the Service had managed a lot of change and had continued to improve performance. Front line staff now felt more enthusiastic about the Service, and also felt that they had more of a voice in its running. The role of elected Members had also been strengthened. She believed that they were no longer struggling to be a 1 star Authority, but were performing at the top of that level if not at a 2 star level.
- A Member stated that PI BV202 (the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in the Local Authority area) was an inappropriate measure to be recorded, as it did only reflect the number of people on the streets over one night.

RESOLVED:

- That (a) **the report on Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing performance should be noted;**
- and;**
- (b) that areas of concern should continue to be monitored.

64. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF PROVIDER SERVICES

The Committee noted a paper on the status of the Provider Review that had been commissioned by Herefordshire Council, the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust.

RESOLVED: that a report on the preferred option would be provided to the next meeting.

65. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE MODERNISATION OF DAY OPPORTUNITIES SERVICES PROVIDED BY HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Committee received the Scrutiny Review of the Modernisation of Day

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Opportunities Services Provided by Herefordshire Council. Councillor WLS Bowen reported that the Group had carried out a number of visits across Herefordshire, and had encountered a wide variety of provision of care, some of which was very traditional. An additional visit had been made to Presteigne, where a more innovative centre was being run. The report contained sixteen recommendations for the Executive, and a proposed Action Plan.

In the ensuing discussion, the following principle points were made:

- Important aspects of care, such as foot care, baths and hot meals were all add-on costs that distorted the actual cost of attending a Day Centre and meant that this could be an expensive service for the elderly.
- Transportation provision was largely chaotic, and commercial taxis did not offer a value for money service. Consideration might be given to scrutinising the contracts held with these companies.
- It was noted that the Madley centre was oversubscribed, and suggested that they might consider offering suggestions to other centres.
- In reply to a question from a Member, the Head of Special Projects said that there were a number of out-dated contracts that would be reviewed by the end of September. The Council had piloted five model contracts, and would combine two of these to provide a pilot model for the voluntary and private sector. The taxi driver contracts would also be reviewed.
- Further to a comment from a Member, the Head of Special Projects drew the attention of the Committee to Appendix 10 of the report that outlined average attendances at all day centres. He said that Shaw Healthcare and the voluntary sector should be encouraged to work together to address any perceived issues of underutilisation. The vision for rationalisation was to produce a service that was based less on buildings and focussed more on the community. This would enable older adults to stay at home, and younger ones to be able to get jobs. The personalisation of budgets would also empower users to choose how they utilised day care centres. It would be a change of culture for both the Council and the users. In reply to further concerns regarding the role of the voluntary sector, he went on to say that it was the Council's intention to bring the sector along with it. He added that some of the private and voluntary agencies were already ahead of this agenda in the way they worked.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) the Committee agreed that the recommendations of the Review Group, set out at Section 4, pages 9 – 11, paragraphs 4.1 – 4.16, should be submitted to Cabinet;**
 - (b) subject to the Review being approved, the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan should be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive had approved its response;**
and;
 - (c) a further report on progress with respect to the Review should be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.**

**66. SCRUTINY REVIEW: TRANSITION FROM LEAVING CARE TO ADULT LIFE
(FINAL REPORT)**

The Committee received the Scrutiny Review of the Transition from Leaving Care to Adult Life. Councillor Pemberton reported that the purpose of the exercise was to review the Council's approach to transition issues for looked after children with support needs from childhood to adult life and to investigate how improvements could be made to the transition process. The Review group had comprised Councillors H Davies, G Lucas, and RV Stockton. She was very grateful for the input from Mr R Kelly who had provided a different focus for the Committee. Councillors PA Andrews and WLS Bowen had supported the Review in their roles as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee. She believed that this purpose had been achieved, and that while it had been a worthwhile exercise, she did believe that a Review was only as good as the changes that were made as a result of it.

The most satisfying part of the process has been the visit to Centre 18 to talk to the young people who used the facility. She added that should intended to write to those who had attended this session in order to let them know what changes the Council planned to make. A vote of thanks was recorded for the Committee Manager (Scrutiny) for his conscientious help in taking forward the Review.

In the ensuing discussion, the following principle points were made:

- A Member asked that a bullet point at item 4 of the report should be altered to read "independent living", rather than "interdependent living".
- In reply to a Member's concern regarding recommendation (j) in the report, the Head of Safeguarding and Vulnerable said that Ofsted had been approached for the figures of care leavers placed in the County by other local authorities, but that they had not provided an adequate response to the Council's requests for information.
- That the nearest Emergency Duty Team for looked after children in care was in Worcester. Consideration should be given to the provision of a team in Hereford. The Interim Director of Adult Social Care added that the contract with the Worcestershire Emergency Duty Team had been renewed this year for a period of one year whilst the Council considered the out of hours contract with the PCT. Work was underway on this, and recommendations would be brought before the Committee within the next few months.
- That, should the concept of a Virtual Head Teacher be taken up, care should be exercised in order to ensure that the pastoral and educational responsibilities of the role should be met.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) the Committee agreed that the recommendations of the Review Group, set out in section 20 of the report, should be submitted to Cabinet;**
 - (b) the Executive's response to the Review, including an action plan, should be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive had**

approved its response;

and;

- (c) a further report on progress with respect to the Review should be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.

67. SHAW HEALTHCARE CONTRACT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO LEADON BANK, LEDBURY

The Committee received a report on the current position of the contract between the Council and Shaw Healthcare, with particular reference to Leadon Bank, Ledbury.

The Head of Safeguarding and Commissioning reported that at present some of the flats in Leadon Bank were not yet let, and the Council was consequently paying for services that it wasn't using. It was also supporting people in the County who could better benefit from staying at Leadon Bank. A number of actions were already being taken to remedy the situation, and these were laid out in the report. She added that it was anticipated that in the future there would be waiting lists for Leadon Bank.

In the ensuing discussion, the following principle points were made:

- that the contractual arrangements with Shaw Healthcare had been necessary, as the council would not have been in a position to provide the major capital investment of £6m that would have been required to provide the required homes.
- that as Turner Court would be closing, the Council had approached Elgar Housing Association about the possibility of offering places for the residents elsewhere.
- in reply to a Member's question, the Head of Safeguarding and Commissioning said that Elmhurst had been transferred to Shaw Healthcare on a four year contract, but that the building was unsuitable for long term usage as it was a listed building. The Home would be closing.

RESOLVED:

- That
- (a) the Council should make full use of discretion in setting Housing Benefit awarded to potential tenants of Leadon Bank at levels that meet rental requirements necessary to secure ongoing viability of the project, including the subsidising of the rent of the 2-bedroomed units;
 - (b) strenuous efforts should continue to be made to let the vacant apartments;
 - (c) that all options should be considered to reduce the unitary charge and increase the value for money of the existing contract;
- and;
- (d) regular progress reports should be presented to the Committee.

68. SCOPING STATEMENT FOR A SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SUPPORT TO CARERS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

The Committee considered the Scoping Statement for the Review of Support to Carers in Herefordshire.

Concerns raised by the Canal Road Day Centre User Group, represented by Mr David Mason and Mr Brian Blunt, were considered. The User Group were critical of the Council concerning what was seen as the lack of consultation by the Adult Social Care Service regarding the move of the Carer's Hub into the Day Centre. The Head of Special Projects apologised if that was the impression that the Group had received, but pointed out that he had met with the Service Users Group on the 19th July in order to go through matters of concern with them.

RESOLVED:

- That:**
- (a) the scoping statement for a Review of Support to Carers in Herefordshire appended to the report be agreed;**
 - (b) That three Members should be appointed to the Review, and Members who were interested in joining should contact the Chairman directly;**
 - (c) That Councillor KG Grumbley be appointed to the Review Group;**
- and;**
- (d) That the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults) would visit the Canal Road Day Centre with the Interim Director of Adult Social Care and the Chairman in order to discuss the concerns of the User Group.**

69. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

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

The meeting ended at 5.00 p.m.
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CHAIRMAN