

**MINUTES of the meeting of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 13 December 2010 at 9.30 am**

**Present:** Councillor PA Andrews (Chairman)  
Councillor AE Gray (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: H Davies, BA Durkin, MJ Fishley, KS Guthrie, MD Lloyd-Hayes,  
JE Pemberton, GA Powell and RV Stockton

**In attendance:** Councillors PJ Edwards, TM James and Mr R Kelly (Voluntary Sector)

**35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor ME Cooper.

**36. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were no named substitutes.

**37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor AE Gray declared a personal interest as a provider of provisions for people with learning disabilities.

**38. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

There were no suggestions from members of the public.

**40. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010/11**

The Committee received a report on the financial position for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing revenue budgets for the period to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

The Principal Accountant reported that the forecast outturn for September was predicting a £3.81m overspend for Adult Social Care, which was as a result of a number of factors. There had been an increase in domiciliary care packages approved for older people, as well as an increase in both residential and nursing care packages. There had been a marked increase in domiciliary care hours for those with Learning Disabilities, which amounted to a 25% increase on the previous year. In Mental Health there was also an increase in domiciliary care, and as some intensive care packages with an expensive provider. These would be reviewed on a regular basis.

The Interim Director of Adult Social Care reported that a number of initiatives were being undertaken as part of the £2m recovery plan; £1m had been achieved to date. Projects had

been reviewed and would be expected to improve standards and be financially benefit to the Local Authority and the user before they were approved. Reablement was an important aspect of the overall scheme, and the increase in integrated budgets would target reablement care, which could be delivered from the localities. It was critical, however, that the resource was managed carefully.

She went on to say that Safeguarding was a significant issue, and it was important that this was in place so that the Service could work with individuals with individualised budgets. There were a large number of providers in the market place, and it was important that they should be integrated into the Safeguarding framework.

Savings from the Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) had been put on hold until there was sufficient data available for the Interim Director to have confidence in the level of savings that were to be had.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- That there would be a more effective Panel process in order to ensure that processes and procedures for charging were
- That the Council did want to encourage the uptake of Personal Budgets, and the Government had set a target that all people in social care should be on a Personal Budget by 1 April 2013. That the Council had set it's Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria at Critical and Substantial, and it was important that the resource system should be consistent with eligibility.
- That it should be clear as to who people are who were coming through to Adult Social Care from Children's Services, and what the nature of their needs were and the costs of their care packages.
- That the overall position of the budget for people with learning disabilities was being considered, in order to ensure that sustainable measures were being put in place to support the needs of the users.
- That it would be ensured that the resources for reablement were being utilised to their fullest extent, as therapeutic care helped to maximise the independence of patients.
- More care would be taken in the future regarding what services would be commissioned, and from which organisations. Savings of £300k were required from the Shaw Healthcare contract, for example. The market had not yet been stimulated in order to get providers to work in a different way and ensure savings could be made.
- The Interim Director of Adult Social Care replied to a question and said that it was important that the number of personalised budgets should be increased, as every user would need to be on one by April 2013. There was a significant cost with learning disability packages, and these would need to be reviewed. It was important that Children's Services should make the Service aware of the number and nature of clients coming from that Service on a regular basis, and what the care packages would cost.
- The Cabinet Member (Older People and Social Care, Adults) stated that the relationship between Adult Social Care and Children's Services had been exhaustively discussed, but it was unclear as to whether any notice had been taken of these discussions by Children's Services. Transitions from Children's

Services were a major issue, and she felt particularly aggrieved about the situation that had arisen.

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT:**

- (a) the report be noted; and;
- (b) the delivery of the recovery plan to mitigate the level of overspend would take place.

**41. HEREFORDSHIRE 2010 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA)**

The Committee noted the Herefordshire 2010 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

**Resolved:**

**That**

- (a) the Committee recognises the usefulness of the JSNA web-site and the summary document for the local health and social care economy, as a practical resource whose research based findings will inform future strategy, detailed planning and commissioning of services and budgets across Herefordshire;
- (b) Notes the Key Points and Recommendations from the 2010 JSNA;
- (c) Encourages the use of the findings of the JSNA across the local health and social care economy, to inform future plans, strategy development, budget decisions and commissioning of services; and;
- (d) The Committee requested a timetable, together with costings, for the introduction of the recommendations and clarification of what services would be provided in a different format in order to acknowledge both increasing public expectations and financial stringency.

**42. AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORT**

The Committee noted a report on the outcome of the Audit Commission Inspection of Strategic Housing Services.

The Assistant Director, Homes & Communities reported that the Inspection report had assessed that the Inspection Report had assessed that Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing Service was Fair with Promising Prospects for Improvement. There were few Authorities that had received this level of assessment, and the Commission had made a series of recommendations that were designed to assist the Council to address any weaknesses identified in the report. The actions that had been suggested as part of the report would be included as part of the normal business planning process.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- A Member said that this was a good review, and supported the decision to utilise it in order to help improve the existing services.
- The Assistant Director, Homes and Communities said that he was aware of local Members concerns regarding damp problems in Housing Association pre-cast

reinforced concrete (PRC) housing stock. Many of the properties had outlived their intended lifespan, and he would take concerns back to the organisations within the Herefordshire Partnership in order to understand their strategies to deal with the matter.

- That costs for enforcement notices that were served against landlords would now be charged to the landlord, and not absorbed by the Council.
- That support mechanisms to sustain tenancies and lessen the impact on neighbourhoods were important where tenants had complex needs. Policies and services around the allocation and letting of property needed to support community sustainability.
- In reply to a question, the Assistant Director went on to say that there was no longer a waiting list for aids and adaptations in the home, but that there was an issue regarding the referral times from the Occupational Therapists, which made it difficult to efficiently plan work programmes and budgets. An officer lead review was underway in order to look at ways of improving links with the Occupational Therapy Team. The Interim Director of Adult Social Services added that there was a significant level of Occupational Therapy capacity in the County, and the service would benefit from the review.
- In reply to a further question, the Assistant Director said that Herefordshire Housing would be invited to a future meeting in order to discuss what their plans for PRC properties were.

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT:**

- (a) **the Audit Commission Inspection Report on Strategic Housing Services be noted; and;**
- (b) **Key recommendations emerging from the Inspection are incorporated into relevant Service Business Plan Action Plans.**

**43. REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HOME CARE SERVICES**

The Committee noted an updated report and timetable for the Scrutiny Review of Home Care in Herefordshire.

The Cabinet Member (Older People and Social Care, Adults) reported that she was disappointed both that the report had not been dealt with within the allotted timescale, and that it had gone to Cabinet in September, when she had been at the Conservative Party Conference. It would be brought to the Cabinet meeting in January 2011.

**RESOLVED: That the update and timetable for receipt of the of the Executive's response to the Review should be noted.**

**44. ADULT SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2010/11**

The Committee noted the updated report on progress in achieving national performance indicator targets and other local performance indicators in Adult Social Care within the Integrated Commissioning Directorate.

The Interim Director of Adult Social Services reported that Herefordshire continued to perform “well” according to the annual Assessment of Performance by the Quality Care Commission (CQC). Whilst the CQC concluded that the capacity to improve in Herefordshire was uncertain, a robust plan was being developed that would respond to the technical proposals in the assessment and would ensure that an outcomes based framework was in place. A consultation exercise would be undertaken on these plans, and it should be clear how the Council would be assessed in 2011/12 by March 2011. It had been expected that CQC would come to Cabinet in January, but in light of the changes that were in hand, nationally from CQC, this was no longer possible.

The Interim Director went on to say that whilst there had been a slight increase in the performance of NI 130 (The number of clients receiving self directed support) to 5.9%, there was an expectation by central government that 30% of clients should be receiving a personalised budget by 2013. A radical reconsideration as to how the initiative was implemented was required, and the resource allocation was being reconsidered. Work to address the shortfall had included increasing the emphasis on offering personal budgets for new service users, which was expected to increase the number of personal budgets by around 25 per month; an increment of 150 by March 2011. This was supported by a short-term central review team which would focus on existing case reviews for 3 months from January 2011. It was estimated that this would deliver an additional 350-400 users with personal budgets by March 2011. She believed that more progress had been made in the previous month in this area than had been achieved for some time.

The Interim Director went on to report that outturns continued to exceed targets for NI136 (The number of people supported to live independently through social care) and the Council was performing both above target and better than national comparator councils

She went on to say that a detailed look at care governance would be undertaken as part of the adult safeguarding agenda. There was concern over the level of safeguarding referrals, and the matter would be reviewed.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- That it was unlikely that any clients who felt they were not capable of managing their own affairs and were unwilling to take up personalised budgets would not lose support, as it had always been assumed that personalised budgets would not be appropriate for all clients. There were a number of incentives that could be built into the system however and, in the final instance, the Local Authority would be able to administer a budget on behalf of a client. This is known as a “managed account”. The aim was to reduce dependency and promote as much independence as possible.
- In reply to a question from a Member, the Interim Director said that safeguarding referrals should be acted on as quickly as possible, and that the screening process that would be introduced in January would greatly reduce waiting times.
- It was unclear as to why NI 131 (rate of delayed transfers of care per 100k of population) had been so high in August, but work was in hand to bring transfer times down. The recent cold weather had not helped the situation.

## **RESOLVED**

### **THAT:**

- (a) progress in managing performance towards achieving targets be noted; and;**
- (b) areas of concern should continue to be addressed.**

#### 45. STRATEGIC HOUSING SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2009/10

The Committee received an updated report on the progress towards the achievement of national performance indicator targets and other local performance indicators for the Homes and Communities Services within the Sustainable Communities Directorate.

The Assistant Director, Homes & Communities reported that the Housing Needs and Development Team continue to work in close partnership with key housing providers across the County in order to deliver against NI 155 (Number of affordable homes delivered) Currently the indicator was below target and the situation continued to be closely monitored. As a result of the current economic situation, Registered Social Landlords and Developers were reluctant to commit to housing schemes and there was a lack of grant funding availability from the Homes and Communities Agency which meant that some developments were being delayed into future years. The target was currently being reconsidered as it was unlikely that it would be achieved.

He went on to say that there was continued pressure on the Homelessness and Housing Advice services. This meant that NI 156 (The number of households living in temporary accommodation) continued to remain below the target of 82 households. In recent weeks numbers had dropped below 55 which reflected well on efforts at preventing homelessness.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- That the figures for the number of households living in temporary accommodation related to the number of households, and not individuals. There were five thousand households in temporary accommodation across the County.
- The Assistant Director replied to a Member's query concerning the number of two bedroom properties that were being built, and said that these were the sort of accommodation that was being applied for, and that there were a lot of young couples who were seeking accommodation in order to be able to leave home. Housing needs surveys were regularly undertaken in rural areas and developers were commissioned to provide housing that met those needs.
- That mediation services were utilised, especially between children and parents. A ruling against Southwark Council now took precedent over the Homelessness Act when dealing with 16 to 17 year olds. In households where there were multiple partners and children from more than one relationship, the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) would have their own policies in place to deal with the needs of young people. The Head of Service was able to refer those most vulnerable households to the Assistant Director in order to have their banding changed and allow the child to be moved to a safer environment.
- The Cabinet Member (Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing), added that she believed that the Planning Department needed a clearer understanding of the needs of vulnerable children in the County.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) **the report on Homes and Communities Services be noted;**
- (c) **areas of concern continue to be monitored; and;**
- (d) **The Committee noted with concern the lack of suitable affordable housing in the County for vulnerable children and young adults.**

**46. ACTION PLAN MONITORING: THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE SUPPORT TO CARERS IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

The Committee noted a paper that provided a further update on the recommendations and executive action plan of the Scrutiny Committee Review of the support to Carers in Herefordshire.

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT:**

- a) the Committee note the update and progress made on the action plan to deliver the Recommendations and Actions; and;
- b) The Committee appreciated the important role that Carers undertook in the County, and recommended that carers funding should be ring fenced.

**47. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted its Work Programme.

**RESOLVED: That the work programme be approved and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

**CHAIRMAN**