

MINUTES of the meeting of Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber. Shire Hall, Hereford on Monday 24 November 2014 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor CNH Attwood (Chairman)
Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, JM Bartlett, PL Bettington, KS Guthrie, JA Hyde, Brig P Jones CBE, JLV Kenyon, J Norris, SJ Robertson and P Sinclair-Knipe

In attendance: Councillors AJM Blackshaw, WLS Bowen, ACR Chappell, BA Durkin, EPJ Harvey, JG Jarvis, AW Johnson, RL Mayo, JW Millar, PM Morgan, GJ Powell, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone and A Seldon

Officers: H Coombes (Director for Adults Wellbeing), J Davidson (Director for Children's Wellbeing), G Hughes (Director for Economy, Communities and Corporate), B Norman (Assistant Director, Governance), P Robinson (Chief Finance Officer), B Baugh and D Penrose (Governance Services)

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors NP Nenadich, J Stone, GA Vaughan-Powell and DB Wilcox. Apologies were also received from Councillor H Bramer (Cabinet Member Contracts and Assets).

33. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Councillor JA Hyde for Councillor DB Wilcox.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor BD Durkin as a Trustee of the Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux.

35. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 1 October 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record.

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

None.

37. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

(Councillor BD Durkin declared an interest)

A question was received from Mrs C Keetch, Chief Executive of the Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) and was published as a supplement to the Agenda.

38. BUDGET 2015/16 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Committee received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer on the Budget for 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy as published as a supplement to the Agenda for the meeting.

The Director of Adults Wellbeing highlighted the following areas:

- That the emphasis for the Directorate was to change the expectations of the population and to help encourage people to take better care of themselves and to encourage support not just from funded services but also from the community. Services would be run on a more efficient basis, with a greater reliance on information technology and the efficient use of data.
- The Care Act 2014 would bring additional service users into the system, as all of the population would have contact with social services in one form or another, and there would need to be alternative ways of commissioning services in the future.
- That the statutory changes that the Council would be obliged to implement on the 1 April 2015 would mean that the commissioning of advice and guidance would have to change, and a single point of access would be provided that would be designed to connect all aspects of the Third Sector. This would also change the way social workers undertook their roles.
- There were certain areas where the Council had not delivered savings, including residential and nursing care, but there was a correlation between the ability to deliver savings and the hospital system. It was intended that further progress toward savings would be made in reablement and telecare in the coming year. There had been delays in Day Care commissioning until the Council was confident of the commissioning system.
- That there had been a great deal of negotiation over how to spend the Better Care Fund monies in the coming year in order to protect Adult Social Care. To achieve system wide thinking, all partners were financially incentivised to work closely together.
- That Public Health had been aligned in the system, and had delivered innovative schemes for demand management within both Adult and Children's Social Care.
- The main risk was the implementation of the Care Act, and the ability of the Wye Valley NHS Trust to deal with the issues that would arise from this.

The Director of Children's Wellbeing highlighted the following areas:

- That the strategy as agreed by Council for the current year would continue, with a focus on reducing costs whilst managing demand.
- That in terms of education and young people, aspects of the Children's budget were protected. Although the birth rate had increased, older young people were moving out of the County and it was important to protect the education budget as part of the growth agenda.
- That there was an increase in costs within the County for children with disabilities and special needs. The demand management slide that had been published as a supplement to the Agenda illustrated the changing models that were needed to meet

the needs of the child. Improved outcomes for children were required at a time when the cost of care would need to be managed.

- Whilst work was underway to reduce the cost of care placements by encouraging fostering and adoption in the County, it had not been possible to reduce the cost of independent fostering services as currently the in-house fostering service was almost full.
- That the Social Work Academy had increased the number of newly qualified social workers available to the Service, allowing it to release more agency staff in the coming year.
- That the multi-agency Families First Programme had turned round 204 families in the current year, with 57 who had been on work programmes moving into employment. £1.2m of funding would have been received by the end of the year, and the Council had been asked to join the next tranche of the programme, which would impact on 1000 families and provide an additional £2.26m over the next five years toward a system wide approach to dealing with troubled families.

The Director of Economies, Communities and Corporate highlighted the following:

- That budget savings of £3.45m had been made, but that there were still £400k of pressures.
- There were a number of approaches being taken to drive out savings and that there was a focus on encouraging the voluntary sector to take on non-statutory services. Income generating services were co-located with other partners in order to reduce costs.
- Savings expectations had been reduced in the coming year. There were a smaller number of assets for disposal, but significant capital receipts were expected from the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone.

The Director of Adults Wellbeing reiterated her response to the question concerning the funding for the Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB), and went on to say that the CAB offered a valuable service, but that it didn't receive all of its funding from the Council. However the Council would continue to provide resources to support the CAB through its premises which equate to a minimum of £75k per annum. In reply to a Member, she went on to say that the Council was actively working with other funding sources who were prepared to consider bids from the CAB.

A National Lottery bid to widen the legal advice services across the County was in place that equated to over £300k and it needed to be established the effectiveness of this investment had been submitted.

Work was being undertaken to ensure that a commissioning process for an organisation that would provide legal advice, as this would ensure that a three year contract would be in place that would enable the provider to be sustainable.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Director of Adults Wellbeing said that this was a challenge for the Council, which was looking at models for working with the third sector and strategic partners to ensure that all strands were addressed through one portal. Parallel working was also in hand with the NHS 111 service and others in order to see how the statutory sector could be connected up. The first phase would be in place by the 1st April 2015. The model being used was currently effectively used by Swindon Borough Council and had resulted in significant reductions in the demand on the NHS and Primary Care.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Director of Children's Wellbeing said that the Risk Register was an active management tool that was reviewed on a monthly basis by both the Children's and Adults Wellbeing Directorate. It was a public report and was reviewed quarterly by the Management Board.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Director of Children's Wellbeing said that consideration had been given to social investment bonds, although they did take time to set up. They might not be appropriate for all aspects of the work of the Service.

In reply to a further question, she went on to say that it was not clear whether the budgeted figure for children's services was sufficient to militate against risks concerning child sexual exploitation that had been exposed in Rotherham in the Jay Report. There had been a full discussion at a recent Workshop on child sexual exploitation held by the Committee, but at this juncture, the full scale of the issues were unknown. Work was in hand with other agencies such as the Police, and further propositions would be made if required. At this point, the funds were sufficient for the plans, however it was clear that there were gaps in services for victims and perpetrators.

In reply to a question from a Member concerning planning restrictions militating against people who wanted to build accommodation for elderly relatives in their own gardens, it was noted that the Assistant Director, Homes and Community Services was undertaking detailed project work into a supplementary planning code to address this sort of issue. Housing for the elderly was a key issue for the elder person care pathways.

In reply to a further question, the Director of Adults Wellbeing said that progress was still to be made regarding the use of agency social workers and the recruitment of social workers was a crucial issue for the service. There were a number of tasks that only qualified social workers were legally able to undertake, and work was in hand to address the issue. Nineteen unqualified social workers had been appointed and would be put through a six month programme. Other considerations were also being used to encourage social workers to come to the Council, such as flexibility of working, caseload levels, and the low level of administrative work. It was noted that whilst it was possible to retain the existing agency staff on agency contracts, it was not possible to employ them on permanent contracts and few were willing to sign up to the Council's terms and conditions.

In reply to a further question, the Director of Adults Wellbeing said that the Better Care Fund would come on stream on 1 April 2015 with £34m joint funding between the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group. It was important to ensure that as many benefits as possible were realised from this joint funding and further services would be made co-terminus if possible. It was noted that work was in hand with the Diocese through the Families First scheme.

Resolved: That the Budget 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm

CHAIRMAN