

MINUTES of the meeting of Social Care & Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Tuesday, 5th April, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs. A.E. Gray, K.G. Grumbley, Mrs. J.A. Hyde, R. Mills,
Mrs. J.E. Pemberton, Ms. G.A. Powell and P.G. Turpin

In attendance: Councillors Mrs. L.O. Barnett, P.E. Harling, D.W. Rule MBE and
W.J.S. Thomas

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs E.M. Bew and Mrs B. Millman a Voluntary Sector representative.

32. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs A.E. Gray and P.G. Turpin declared personal interests in respect of agenda item 7: Respite Services for People with Learning Disabilities in Herefordshire.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th December, 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHANGES TO SCRUTINY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Director of Children's Services informed the Committee of recent changes with implications for the scrutiny of Children's Services at both national and local level.

These included at national level the consequences of: the introduction of the Children Act 2004, the Government's Green Paper: Independence, Well-being and Choice: Our Vision for the Future of Social Care for Adults in England; the requirement to appoint a Director of Adult Social Care and the associated Government guidance which had been issued; the merger of the Commission for Social Care Inspection with the Healthcare Commission; and the imminent Joint Area Review of Children's Services.

She noted that the Council would shortly be determining arrangements for the scrutiny of Children's Services.

The Committee noted these changes and commented on the importance of ensuring that in responding to them solutions were devised which took full account of local circumstances.

It was requested that a summary of the Director's remarks should be circulated to Members of the Committee.

36. REVIEW OF HOME SUPPORT SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND REVIEW OF ACCOMMODATION, HOUSING & HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT NEEDS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING SEVERE & ENDURING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

The Committee considered the findings of the Scrutiny Review Groups following the review of Home Support Services for Older People and the review of Accommodation, Housing and Housing-related Support Needs of People Experiencing Severe and Enduring Mental Health Problems.

The report set out the background to the commissioning of the reviews, progress on which had last been reported to the Committee in December 2004. The detailed review reports were appended.

Review of Home Support Services for Older People

The Head of Social Care (Adults) presented the report on the review of Home Support Services for Older People reminding the Committee of the Review's terms of reference, explaining the methodology employed in undertaking the review, and commenting upon each section of the review report in turn and the resulting recommendations.

In discussing the review the following principal points were made:

- It was asked whether staff whom Members had shadowed as part of the Review had expressed any views on their experience of working with Members in this way. The Head of Social Care (Adults) reported that staff feedback had not highlighted any issues. However, it had been important to brief staff beforehand and ensure that they understood the purpose of the exercise. Some concerns had been raised about Members accompanying staff to meetings with service users because of the sensitive subject matter which needed to be discussed. However, careful planning and management had enabled Members to engage appropriately with service users and the exercise had proved beneficial.
- Members serving on the Review Group commented generally on how informative they had found work shadowing, enhancing their understanding of the complexity of the issues staff faced and the pressure placed upon them.
- Particular attention was drawn to the fact that many tasks now carried out by home care staff would at one time have been carried out by nursing staff. The Review Group had felt that there had not been an adequate transfer of resources from the health service to Social Care along with the transfer of tasks and responsibilities. It was suggested that the recommendation in the report that the Health and Social Care Partnership should examine the way in which resources for home care were shared needed to be reinforced and evidence provided that resources were being distributed equitably.
- It was requested that a report on the take up by older people of the direct payments option for obtaining services should be made to a future meeting.

Review of Accommodation, Housing and Housing-related Support Needs of People Experiencing Severe and Enduring Mental Health Problems

The Head of Strategic Housing presented the report on the review of Accommodation, Housing and Housing-related Support Needs of People Experiencing Severe and Enduring Mental Health Problems reminding the Committee of the review's terms of reference, explaining the methodology employed in undertaking the review, and commenting upon each section of the review report in turn and the resulting recommendations.

Members of the Review Group commented on the extreme shortages of appropriate affordable accommodation for this user group and the importance of inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation. Particular attention was drawn to the need to ensure that agreement was concluded with the Primary Care Trust about the commitment of resources to fund Mental Health Services to support the proposed Mental Health Housing Plan.

RESOLVED:

- That
- (a) **the recommendations of the review of Home Support Services for Older People, as amended, as set out in the appendix to these Minutes, be approved for submission to the Cabinet Member (Social Care & Strategic Housing);**
 - (b) **a report on the take up by older people of the direct payments option for obtaining services should be made to a future meeting;**
- and**
- (c) **the recommendations of the review of Accommodation, Housing and Housing-related Support Needs of People Experiencing Severe and Enduring Mental Health Problems as set out in the appendix to these Minutes be approved for submission to the Cabinet Member (Social Care & Strategic Housing).**

37. RESPITE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN HEREFORDSHIRE

(Councillors Mrs A.E. Gray and P.G. Turpin declared personal interests.)

Further to the report to the Committee in October 2004 the Committee received an update on the provision of respite care services for people with a learning disability.

The report set out action taken to address issues which had been identified as requiring an immediate response and those issues which required a longer term solution. It was intended to appoint a Change Manager for learning disability to complete a longer term-piece of work in partnership with the relevant Service Manager, to identify future needs more accurately and enable the commissioning of appropriate services to provide short-breaks and emergency bed provision, alongside the development of innovative alternatives to this type of provision.

The Head of Social Care (Adults) drew particular attention to the intention to seek to prevent emergency placements wherever possible and the development of an

interim placement agreement, a copy of which was appended to the report, designed to ensure that any emergency placements which were made were moved on within an appropriate timescale. She also reported that it had not yet been possible to appoint a Change Manager. This would delay the work on longer-term solutions.

Concern was expressed about the lack of progress in developing a short break strategy. In response the Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing commented on the extent to which the strategy was interlinked with other services, hence the need for the longer-term solution and for a Change Manager to develop it, given the pressures on existing management capacity.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted but with some concern and a further report be prepared by the Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing, when it was considered timely to do so following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

**38. SOCIAL SERVICES AND STRATEGIC HOUSING BUDGET MONITORING
2004/05 - 10 MONTHLY REPORT**

The Committee was informed of the budget monitoring position for Social Care and Strategic Housing for the first ten months of the financial year 2004/05.

The Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing presented the report outlining the results of the investment in Older People's Services, the continuing pressure on other services, the exceptional circumstances which had arisen in the year and the resultant projected overspend of £1,514,000 on the Social Care budget, of which exceptional items accounted for £758,000.

She reported that the Directorate's savings plan had not been realised in full and in particular had not had the same impact as planned in restraining expenditure or taking into account key pressures on Learning Disabilities Services. A report to Cabinet had also identified significant service challenges. Given the size of the problem, it had been decided to conduct a review, external to the directorate, of the financial arrangements and spending decisions in order to have secure budget planning for 2005/06. She noted that funding from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to fund continuing care had been less than assumed. She also commented that discussions were still ongoing with the PCT over its contribution to the overspend on other budgets pooled with the Council under a Section 31 Agreement. A more robust risk sharing and management accountability agreement was being developed for 2005/2006.

In relation to the Strategic Housing budget it was noted that expenditure on the homelessness budget, which had been identified to the Committee as a potential risk, had exceeded forecasts. Robust management action was being taken to manage the overspend down to the projected level of £163,000 for the overall Strategic Housing budget.

The County Treasurer commented that he had confidence in the management arrangements which had been and were being applied within Social Services. He reported that work was ongoing regarding the 2005/06 budget to seek to minimise the risk of expenditure being incurred unexpectedly.

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

- Concern was expressed at the difficulties which appeared to have arisen with the PCT over contributions to pooled budgets and the need to resolve these was

emphasised.

- In response to a question the Director explained why the Directorate had had to review its funding decisions for some individual cases as a result of legal challenge, incurring some unexpected additional expenditure. She advised that measures had been put in place to prevent exceptional expenditure being incurred again for this reason.
- The County Treasurer advised that he would not in general terms expect the expenditure on exceptional items in 2004/05 to be repeated.
- The Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing) cautioned that given the nature of the Services provided in her programme area unexpected expenditure would almost inevitably be incurred.
- It was proposed that the recovery plan prepared for Learning Disability Services should be reported to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the budget monitoring report for the first 10 months of the financial year 2004/05 be noted;

and

(b) the recovery plan prepared for Learning Disability Services be reported to the Committee.

39. PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2004/2005

The Committee was informed of the available Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators position and current performance management work within the Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate.

The Performance Improvement Manager reported that performance against the 10 indicators identified by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in the current year as key threshold indicators for social care services was acceptable. A Council could not be judged to be performing well if it failed to reach a specified level of performance against any of these key threshold indicators. It was noted that the Commission could change the key threshold indicators each year as well as the specified thresholds themselves and that the Council were only made aware of the Commission's decision late in the relevant year.

In the course of discussion it was noted that the Anchor Trust (Anchor Staying Put) had given notice of its intention to withdraw from the its role in providing home improvement agency Services for the Council. The Head of Strategic Housing advised that Anchor Trust appeared to have been reviewing its approach to Stay-Put Services nationally and that a challenge had emerged in relation to a requirement for assurances on increasing financial support which the Council was unable to give. Anchor had given 6 months notice of its withdrawal during which consideration would be given to how best to provide a Home Improvement Agency Service in the future. It was requested that the outcome of the considerations should be reported to the Committee.

- That
- (a) the report on Social Care and Strategic Housing Performance be noted;
 - (b) areas of concern continue to be monitored;
- and
- (c) a report be made to the Committee on conclusion of the review of the provision of home improvement agency services.

40. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted that it was proposed that the Committee's Work Programme should be prepared on conclusion of a review of the Committee's remit in the light of the Children Act 2004 and associated political and managerial changes.

It was suggested that the following matters should be scrutinised: Homelessness and Homelessness Advice; Services and Resources for those with Learning Disabilities (including respite care), partnership working with the Primary Care Trust; provision of equipment aids and adaptations and the Supporting People programme.

RESOLVED: That the position on the Committee's Work Programme and matters it was suggested should be scrutinised as referred to above be noted.

41. REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER (SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING)

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing).

A report had been prepared by the Cabinet Member and circulated to the Committee. Consequent upon the appointment of a Cabinet Member for Children's Services her report focused on developments in Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, setting out what had been achieved since her previous report in September 2003 and her main priorities for 2005/06.

In presenting the report the Cabinet Member noted in particular the work which had been undertaken to manage the social care budget, the effect this had had on services and the need for additional investment in future years to meet the significant demand for services.

The Committee noted the presentation and the Chairman acknowledged the Cabinet Member's comments welcoming the support of the Scrutiny Committee in seeking to ensure effective service delivery.

42. REPORT ON SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS (PART 8)

The Committee received a report on the outcome of two serious case reviews commissioned by Herefordshire Area Child Protection Committee into the actions of Social Care and other agencies in respect of the care of two Children.

The Committee noted the recommendations made as a result of the reviews and that action plans were being prepared in response to the Reviews' findings.

(Appendix to Minute Number 36)

Recommendations of Review of Home Support Services for Older People

That:

1. An inter-agency, overarching strategy for well-being and better ageing in Herefordshire is developed.
2. The Health and Social Care Partnership continue to examine the vital role of home care and explore better ways of sharing resources more equitably for better outcomes for older people, and provide evidence of the action which has been taken in support of this approach.
3. A home care workforce strategy is developed with independent sector involvement.
1. The eligibility criteria for Supporting People Services and Social Care are clarified.

Review of Home Support Services for Older People and the review of Accommodation, Housing and Housing-related Support Needs of People Experiencing Severe and Enduring Mental Health Problems

- 7.1 The review considers the completion of a Mental Health Housing Plan to be an essential requirement to the identification and development of appropriate housing responses necessary to meeting the needs of people experiencing mental health problems.
- 7.2 The recent invitation from Mental Health Services to Strategic Housing Services to participate in the development of a Mental Health Housing Plan is noted and welcomed. Mental Health Services should seek the widest possible partnerships in developing and implementing the strategy and funding responsibilities should be firmly established.
- 7.3 Once there is clarity over the provision of Mental Health services required, the Primary Care Trust should commit the necessary resources to enable the funding of Mental Health Services which will contribute to supporting the outcomes of the Mental Health Housing Plan. The individual accountabilities and contributions of each partner should be agreed.
- 7.4 Transitional supported housing is an essential element in a spectrum of accommodation and housing options for people with mental health problems. However, it may not be appropriate for some people with complex and enduring mental health problems. Services for these people are outside the scope of the Supporting People programme as their needs cannot adequately be met through the provision of low level housing related support. These services should be funded appropriately by the PCT. Additional investment should be made by the PCT to provide accommodation and support services to those whose needs should not be met through Supporting People funding.

- 7.5 That a review of existing accommodation-based schemes should be undertaken to establish an accurate picture of blockages in the system due to the perceived lack of move-on accommodation for those who are ready to do so.
- 7.6 That Mental Health Services should ensure close engagement with reviews undertaken under the Supporting People Review Programme to ensure shared and robust ownership of review recommendations.
- 7.7 That the Supporting People Team, in partnership with Mental Health Services, should explore opportunities to provide clarity to partners and providers over the role and expectations of professionals providing clinical and therapeutic interventions and professionals providing housing-related support.
- 7.8 That Mental Health Services should closely engage in any opportunities to contribute to the development of related strategies, including the Supporting People Strategy 2005 – 2010 and annual review.
- 7.9 That Registered Social Landlords should be approached with a view to exploring what opportunities existed for enhanced responses to the needs of tenants with mental health problems e.g. through enhanced responses to repair requests at the early stages of a tenancy.
- 7.10 That options for funding an Advocacy role to assist vulnerable applicants or their support workers with accessing the Home Point system be explored with a view to ensuring engagement in the choice-based lettings process.
- 7.11 That the beneficial role of user groups in enabling service users to have a voice should be noted and that the Council and Primary Care Trust should consider how to re-energise this important sector.

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