

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 3 December 2009

PRESENT

Cllr Miss A Sparrow (Chairman)
Cllr A M Turner (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs J Freeman
Mrs R B Gammons
Mrs S A Goodchild

Cllrs Ms A M W Graham
J Kane
P Rawcliffe

Apologies for Absence: Cllr P Freeman

Substitutes: Cllr P Hollick (In place of P Freeman)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs D Bowater
Mrs C Hegley
Dr R Egan

Officers in Attendance:

Mr P Groom	– Head of Commissioning (Adult Social Care)
Mr T Keaveney	– Assistant Director Housing Services
Ms N Kynoch	– Head of Learning Disabilities and Mental Health
Mrs J Ogley	– Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Ms M Peaston	– Senior Democratic Services Officer
Miss C Powell	– Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Others in Attendance Mr Smith – Bedfordshire LINK

SCHH/09/81 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Freeman and Councillor Hollick was present as his substitute.

Councillor Sparrow was unavoidably detained and joined the meeting at item 11 Directorate Overview. Until that point Councillor Andrew Turner chaired the meeting.

SCHH/09/82 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SCHH/09/83 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Goodchild declared a personal interest by reason of being a service user, as her husband was a resident in a care home.

Councillor Rita Egan declared a personal interest by reason of being a service user, as she lived in sheltered housing.

SCHH/09/84 Chairman's Announcements and Matters of Communication

The Chairman provided an oral report following his attendance at the recent East of England Health conference. The conference had gone well.

SCHH/09/85 Petitions

No petitions had been received.

SCHH/09/86 Public Questions, Statements and Deputations

There were no questions, statements or deputations from the public.

SCHH/09/87 Disclosure of Exempt Information

No matters of exempt information were anticipated.

SCHH/09/88 Call-In

There had been no matters of call-in for consideration.

SCHH/09/89 Requested Items

There were no specific requested items.

SCHH/09/90 Local Involvement Network (LINK) Update

Bob Smith, Interim Vice-Chairman and Finance Officer of the LINK, provided a report highlighting local health matters influencing LINK activity.

Members also received an update regarding the wish by Bedford Borough Council to withdraw from the arrangements for the LINK host. Central Bedfordshire Council was currently negotiating with Bedford Borough Council on this matter as it was important that this council was not disadvantaged by another council's preference. The Director advised that the Committee would be kept unformed of developments on a monthly basis.

RESOLVED to note the report.

SCHH/09/91 Directorate Overview: Learning Disabilities

The Committee received a presentation on the Directorate's activities in relation to Learning Disabilities. The slides are attached at **Appendix A**.

In response to a question regarding accommodation provision for people with learning difficulties who attended further education colleges, it was noted that a list of care homes and other special needs accommodation would be provided to members of the Committee at the request of the Chairman.

Members noted that Ludun would be the subject of a report to the Committee in the due course as there were decisions which would need to be made in the near future.

It was noted that support was given when requested to assist with completing the self assessment questionnaire.

A debate ensued regarding the question of entitlement or eligibility for services. It was noted that making the most effective use of resources was always the aim. Members also noted that an innovative approach to delivering adult social care services would be required for the future. The question of eligibility criteria would be brought to this Committee for debate and consultation with other stakeholders would also be carried out.

A comment was made that Houghton Regis was a town separate from Dunstable and services in Dunstable should not be considered as local in Houghton Regis.

In response to a comment Members noted that evidence of letting patterns including to people with disabilities would be brought to a future meeting. This would enable the Committee to scrutinise whether the Council's intentions regarding housing allocation were being met. In response to a question, Members were advised that the larger social landlords were responsive to the needs of people with disabilities but some of the smaller social landlords experienced tensions in this area.

The Committee noted the presentation.

SCHH/09/92 Quarter 2 Budget and Performance Information

The Committee received a report setting out the Quarter 2 Performance. Members considered the indicators which were off-track or which should be monitored.

The Director commented that adult social care services had been spiralling downwards for some time in the legacy authority. A recovery programme was in place but it would take time for the improvements to become embedded. In response Councillor Hegley, Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Health, read aloud from a letter which had been received from the Care Quality Commissioners. The letter acknowledged that a detailed action plan was in

place at Central Bedfordshire Council to address the poor quality of adult social care services, and that there was focused leadership and a determination to improve.

Members noted that the poor performance recorded for NI 135 (Carers receiving needs assessment etc) could be due to a data problem but if so there should be an improvement in the next month.

The Committee noted that a local safeguarding indicator had been included as there was no national indicator for this.

Members noted the performance indicators relating to housing and that consideration was being given as to whether vulnerable people were following the bidding procedure for choice based lettings, and if so, whether they were proportionately successful. A report on this would be brought to the next meeting.

Members sought information as to why the number of cases of Anti Social Behaviour had shown a sharp rise from 8 to 37. It was noted that consultation had shown that there was considerable concern regarding anti-social behaviour, so in response a new measure of recording it had been introduced. The increase in focus had led to more rigorous recording. It was hoped that this year a baseline for anti-social behaviour could be identified.

The Committee moved on to consider part B of the report, which concerned budgetary information.

The Committee noted that the report was set out in the corporate style and that all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees had received their budget report in the same format.

Comments were made indicating disappointment with the report both in content and style. Information was lacking with regard to staffing costs and shared costs with the NHS. There was a lack of clarity stemming from the integration of the HRA into the totality of the accounts.

The Director advised that an overspend had been inherited from the legacy authority with more difficulties becoming apparent over time. There were anomalies where matters had not been addressed and possible wrong information, for example with regard to the extent of the PCT debt. Efficiencies had been inherited but with no plan to address them.

Members noted that efforts were being made to improve this situation and to bring the budget under control.

In response to a question regarding financial assessments, Members were advised that there was one means test for residential care and another for domiciliary support. Undercharging at a care home could be redressed but undercharging for domiciliary care could only be corrected to the date that the appropriate charge was notified. In a full year the impact of the undercharging could be £400,000 but it would be less this year.

Members were also advised that for some years Bedfordshire County Council had not charged a number of people who should have paid for residential care. Members noted that there could be an adverse response when arrangements were made to start charging.

The Director advised that towards the end of 2009/2010 a review of the charging policy would be carried out. Interested groups and individuals were expected to attend the Committee's meeting at which this was considered. It was also noted that wherever a means test was carried out, a comprehensive benefits review was also made.

RESOLVED:-

1. to note the Quarter 2 Performance report;
2. to note the latest budget projections for the year and the associated service implications;
3. to note the management actions proposed at 3.4(d);
4. to note the budget virements since the last report.

SCHH/09/93 Substantial Variations and Developments of the Health Service

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that she had met with a representative of the PCT to consider the approach to determining local agreement on what constituted substantial variations and developments. They had discussed the commissioning cycle process and identifying triggers for consultation. This work was nearing completion and a report would be brought to the Committee's February 2010 meeting.

SCHH/09/94 Revised Work Programme

The Committee noted the revised Work Programme and the additional matters which had been identified at this meeting for inclusion on it. These included:

- Adult social care review eligibility criteria
- Evidence of patterns of letting, including to disabled people and very vulnerable people
- Personalisation
- A focused look at safeguarding
- Review of a fairer charging policy.

SCHH/09/95 Date of Next Meeting

Noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 7 January 2010 in Dunstable.

Chairman

.....

Date

.....

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.15 p.m.)