
Meeting: Social Care, Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 05 March 2012

Subject: 2010/11 Local Account

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley , Executive Member for Social Care, Health & Housing

Summary: This report is to inform the committee on the progress with the production of the Local Account for Adult Social Care and to seek their opinion on the format and content of the brochure.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogle, Director of Social Care, Health & Housing

Contact Officer: Althea Mitcham, Head of Business Infrastructure

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The Local Account deals with planning for and delivery of responsive adult social care services and meets with the Council's vision to 'improve the quality of life of all in Central Bedfordshire' and its priority of 'supporting and caring for an ageing population'.

Financial:

2. A budget of £8,000 has been identified for the production and distribution of the Local account for 2010/11, which will be met from within existing budgets for this and future years.

Legal:

3. The Local Account proposals are not currently part of any legislation, although it is included in the Department of Health document Transparency in outcomes: a framework for quality in adult social care. It will form part of the evidence used to track performance of Local Authorities by the national Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care Board.

Risk Management:

4. The main risk is that the Local Account is not seen as a credible document by residents or by the Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care Board. It is important that the Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care Board considers the Local Account a reliable account of the improvements in services and meeting the priorities that the Council has set around its Adult Social Care services.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Residents are invited to ask for the brochure in large print or a different format including language.
7. The production of the Local Account in 'easy read' format is being considered for the future for customers and residents who have low levels of literacy.

Community Safety:

8. Not Applicable.

Sustainability:

9. Not Applicable.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to comment on the format and content of the 2010/11 Central Bedfordshire Local Account and suggest any improvements that can be used strengthen the version for 2011/12.

Background

11. Adult Social Care services within Councils are no longer assessed each year by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or through performance against a list of national targets.
12. A new system has been introduced and was included in the Department of Health publication 'Transparency in outcomes: a framework for quality in adult social care'. The revised performance framework is very much focussed on sector led improvement and includes peer reviews and the requirement to produce an annual statement on outcomes and priorities called a Local Account. A revised national data set (performance indicators) has also been developed.

13. A Local Account is a document to be published by the council and should explain the progress it has made achieving its goals for adult social care, over the past year. The aim of the Local Account is to support transparency at a local level by providing a means for councils and residents to scrutinise progress against priorities and outcomes achieved.
14. This is part of the government's move to make councils more accountable to their local populations for the quality of adult social care services.
15. A national body known as the Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care Board has been set up to monitor all councils progress and raise concerns and/or start intervention measures if they consider a council is not performing well.
16. The Board recommended that a Local Account be produced in 2011/12 to cover the period 2010/11. It suggested that councils report their account to local people by placing it on their websites. Additionally, councils might consider how to ensure that information is readily available to people who may not readily access websites.

The 2010/11 Central Bedfordshire Local Account

17. There has been very little information available from the government or its agencies on the prescribed format of the Local Account. The original Transparency in Outcomes response document had promised some guidance as to what a Local Account should look like but this has not been forthcoming. A letter was produced by the Association of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Group (LGG) which outlined some ideas for inclusion and this has been used to develop the content of the Central Bedfordshire Local Account.
18. The core requirement for a Local Account is to report on the quality of adult social care in Central Bedfordshire, but in developing Local Accounts, the Council should be considering the following issues:
 - How the local account is driven by customers and residents of Central Bedfordshire?
 - How might external challenge of the Local Account be undertaken in a way which allows an objective perspective?
 - How does the Local Account relate to reporting on health outcomes?
 - How does the local account fit with corporate reporting?
 - What is the role of the Local Strategic Partnership and other Boards, including the Adult Safeguarding Board, in feeding into the Local Account?
 - What will be the role of the Health and Well-being Board (HWB Board) in feeding into the Local Account?

19. The Council undertook some work last year in developing a sector-led improvement framework working with the East of England region. It capitalised on this work and used some of the information collected during this exercise to create a position statement of the improvement journey by highlighting successes, goals achieved and the plans for the future.
20. As a result the 2010/11 Local Account, attached at appendix A, was structured around the Outcomes Framework providing examples of how services are meeting needs and includes case studies demonstrating actual delivery. It also includes financial information, the priorities for 2011/12 and some of the performance targets which will help the Council deliver those priorities.
21. The key messages included in the first Local account are:
- The Council's journey of moving adult social care from institutional services to more personal solutions.
 - The improvements made around safeguarding of vulnerable adults.
 - Progress on workforce development.
 - What information, advice and support are available for all.
 - How the Council ensures that high quality services are provided.
 - The types of preventative services available to help people to live at home longer.
 - How the Council collects and uses feedback from our customers.
22. The future priorities for the Council's Adult Social care services highlighted are:
- Investing more in primary prevention, as opposed to acute/long term care.
 - Continue to improve the safeguarding service following the recent peer review.
 - Increase the uptake of personal budgets.
 - Increase the use of Reablement services.
 - Shape our workforce to deliver a more person centred approach to services.
 - Strengthen the quality assurance framework for the providers of community social care services and residential care.
 - Work close with health partners to deliver a joined-up service which will improve the customer experience.

23. As a result of competing priorities there was limited opportunity to carry out extensive consultation with people who use or provide services when preparing the 2010/11 Local Account. It is planned that for future production, service users, service providers and residents are all consulted about what their priorities are so that these can be included in the service plans and progress in meeting the priorities reported in future years.

Future Local Accounts

24. The process of producing the Local Account is inextricably linked to other corporate processes, particularly the business planning cycle. Normally service business plans are produced for the start of a new financial year (1 April).
25. There is an expectation that the delivery plans of Council Services will have included stakeholder and community engagement and the identification of priority outcomes and service commissioning. Market shaping activities during this cycle will also involve dialogue with providers. The Local Account should come at the end of the business cycle.
26. There will be a key number of dependants, particularly financial data, that will constrain the timeline, but as the end of the year is March, the Local Account should be produced as soon as possible after that date if it is to be timely and relevant. The earliest feasible date is June, as the Personal Social Services Expenditure and Unit Costs for year ending 31 March 2011 is due for return on 6 July 2011. National guidance provided suggests producing the Local Account by August.
27. The Health and Well Being Board and the LINK will have important roles in play in the development of these accounts. The NHS remains a key stakeholder and the Council is expected to have a continuing dialog with the voluntary and charitable sector. The Government also see providers as part of the 'conversation' at a local level.
28. For the 2011/12 Local Account the Council can build upon existing communication channels with its residents, providers and partners to gauge priorities for Adult Social Care rather than undertaking a separate and specific exercise. Established communication channels include:
- 'Let's Talk', a bi-yearly meeting with residents across Central Bedfordshire during February and June.
 - Community Information events for Social Care, Health and Housing including 'Just Ask and the Rural Area Vehicle for Education (RAVE).
 - Adult Social Care Customer and Carers panels, and forums
 - Voluntary and Community Groups (including the Older Peoples' Reference Group)
 - Delivery Partnership Meetings

- The Council's website
 - Feedback by way of complaints
 - Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Current surveys can be refreshed to include questions about priorities.
 - Community Events arranged by other services in the Council.
29. The Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care Board does not want to be prescriptive about the format, structure and content of Local Account because these are a matter for local discretion. If Local Accounts are produced, it is recommended that they be in a language that customers understand and aimed at the whole community. At a minimum the Council should demonstrate how customer feedback has fed into the Local Account.
30. A feedback sheet (attached at appendix B) and electronic form has been developed so that residents can let us know what they think about the 2010/11 Local Account and what information they would like to see in future versions.
31. We will gather views on what format people would find most useful to develop future copies and also view what is considered best practice nationally when this is shared.

Conclusion and Next Steps

32. The Council's first Local Account of Adult Social Care for 2010/11 is published and can be viewed on the Council's website along with a feedback form. Hard copies will also be made available where requested.
33. Plans are being drawn up to produce the Local Account for 2011/12 and feedback from the Committee is sought on how to improve the current version.

Appendices:

Appendix A – (Local Account)

Appendix B – (Local Account Feedback Form)

Background papers and their location:

None