

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**
held on Wednesday, 18th January, 2012 at Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M J Simon (Chairman)
Councillor B Silvester (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Andrew, D Bebbington, I Faseyi, L Jeuda, S Jones, F Keegan,
J Saunders and M Grant

Apologies

Councillors J Jackson, B Murphy and D Stockton

In Attendance

Councillors R Domleo, O Hunter and D Flude

Officers

Lucia Scally – Head of Strategic Commissioning and Safeguarding
Jacqui Evans – Head of Local Delivery/Independent Living Services
Patrick Rhoden – Principal Accountant
Karen Whitehead – Private Sector Housing Manager
Mark Grimshaw – Scrutiny Officer

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman noted that those Members who had provided their apologies were absent due to a meeting clash with the Strategic Planning Committee which had been moved forward due to a heavy agenda. A concern was expressed that this had been done without due consideration to the scheduled Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS/PARTY WHIP

None noted.

44 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Charlotte Peters-Rock, a representative from Knutsford Area for Knutsford Action, attended to address the Committee. She made the following points:

- That the Committee should commend the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services for relinquishing control of the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio as it was argued that this was creating a conflict of interest. Mrs Peters-Rock stated that the Committee should examine what the impact of having both portfolios joined for several months had been.
- The Committee was asked what it was doing to oversee the distress caused by the actions of the Council – without prior consultation – towards service users and their family carers (with regard to the ongoing Building Base Review). It was asserted that this issue required an urgent response as Mrs Peters-Rock argued that the Health and Wellbeing Committee had abrogated responsibility for such health and wellbeing oversight to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.
- The Committee was also asked to undertake a review of the ‘severe strain’ caused to service users and their family carers (as a result of the Building Based Review) so that such strain could be mitigated wherever possible. She asserted that in future, the reasoning behind similar decisions should be made clear and that consultations should be held in advance so that no adverse decisions would be made which disadvantage ‘the vulnerable’, whether they be service users or their family carers.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Peters-Rock for her attendance and assured her that a written response would be provided.

45 ADULT SOCIAL CARE BUDGET - UPDATE ON 2011/12 OUTTURN

Members considered a report on the financial outturn of the Adult’s Department for 2011-12. This report built on the Mid Year Review of Financial Performance and provided further information on the mitigation strategies which were in place to help to reduce forecast overspends. Patrick Rhoden, Principal Accountant, reported that whilst the Three Quarter Financial position had yet to be finalised, the indication was that there would be a reduction in the overspend from the Mid Year position.

Lucia Scally, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Safeguarding, continued to go through each part of the Adult’s budget, highlighting the reasons for the overspend and what mitigation strategies had been put in place as a result. Members asked questions and made comments after each area.

Care4CE

Lucia Scally reported that there was a projected £1.1m overspend in this area and that this was due to the delay in delivering the rationalisation of building use and linked temporary decommissioning of ECT beds.

It was queried why there had been a delay in the rationalisation and what lessons had been learned. Councillor Roland Domleo, Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, commented that it was vital that the consultation process had been as comprehensive as possible and therefore the delay had been necessary. He also noted that the process of building valuation had taken longer than expected. In terms of what had been learned, Councillor Domleo noted that in future there would have to be a proper programme time plan on such a project.

It was questioned how long it would take to complete the Building Based Review and whether this would have an impact on the 2012/13 budget. A number of Members were doubtful that the proposed saving would be realised as the rationalisation process would not begin until after April 2012. Councillor Domleo stated that the saving would be incremental and Lucia Scally noted that the service would account for the savings profile once a final decision had been reached.

Attention was drawn to a point that had been made in a previous meeting regarding a purported disjoint between assets and adult social care which had a part to play in delaying the building base review thereby negating any potential savings for 2011/12. It was noted that this point would be reiterated when the final Building Base Review paper was submitted to scrutiny.

Individual Commissioning

Jacqui Evans, Head of Local Delivery/Independent Living Services, reported that there was a forecasted £3.241m overspend and that this position had not changed dramatically since the Mid Year Review. She explained that the overspend position was due to two main factors. Firstly, increased numbers in residential and nursing care, either because people were living longer in these settings or because individuals were increasingly depleting their own financial capital and as a result were turning to the Council for care cost support. Secondly, those in receipt of care were tending to require larger packages than individuals presenting for care previously. Jacqui Evans continued to outline ongoing initiatives which were in place to try and mitigate demand. These were linked to the preventative and re-ablement agendas and it was suggested that Scrutiny might receive a report detailing this work at a subsequent meeting.

A number of comments were made in support of the preventative work that the Council was doing in order to help reduce demand on services and it stated that this should be continued. Attention was drawn to assistive technology and in particular how important it was that information regarding this service was disseminated as widely as possible. It was suggested that putting on road shows would be a good way of achieving this. Jacqui Evans acknowledged that these were helpful comments and noted that the Council did advise people in terms of assistive technology on their first contact with the Council. She also reported that the Council was looking at a business case for employing more staff to communicate with partners and end users about the potential of assistive technology.

It was queried whether there was any update with regards to the money that was to be recouped from the Direct Payments budget. Jacqui Evans reported that this was an on-going process.

It was questioned whether there had been any impact on the respite budget as a result of the increasing trend of the elderly caring for the elderly. Jacqui Evans explained that this was being looked at as part of the Building Based Review. She acknowledged that the challenge for the Department was in how to provide both sufficient general respite and the more costly dementia respite care for which there was now a greater demand. She asserted that a balance was required but that it was likely that the number dementia respite beds would be increasing.

It was queried what the service was doing to evaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of care packages. Jacqui Evans drew attention to the on-going work to review care packages. She reported that this had saved approximately £4.4m by applying Fair Access to Care (FACS) criteria and by increasingly offering preventative and re-ablement options. Jacqui Evans also confirmed that work was being done to analyse why some money in the direct payments budget had not been spent.

Attention was drawn to the proposed savings in the adult transport budget. It was queried why the figure for transport was going up by £500k in 2012/13 and back down to the 2011/12 figure in 2013/14. Councillor Roland Domleo explained that there was a one-off cost required in 2012/13 in order to make transport efficiencies in the future. It was acknowledged that this did not explain why the 2013/14 figure had not decreased beyond that in 2011/12, even after money being spent to achieve efficiencies. Jacqui Evans agreed to explore this issue further at the next meeting.

Strategic Commissioning

Lucia Scally noted that there was an overspend of £0.785m projected for this area. She reported that the service had already taken remedial action using areas of underspend and savings.

It was queried whether the service had carried out an impact assessment as a result of the proposed welfare cuts from central government. Lucia reported that Alison McCudden, Commissioning Manager – Income Maximisation, had produced a paper on this issue which could possibly come to Scrutiny if required.

It was questioned how much of the re-ablement agenda was funded by the NHS. Jacqui Evans explained that the NHS funded the 6 week intermediate care package and that the department was looking at convergences and synergies with the Council's own re-ablement services in order to create further efficiencies. It was requested that the Committee receive further explanation on the work around re-ablement agenda and what the impact of this had been and what it might be in the future.

In providing a final comment, Councillor Roland Domleo asserted that whilst the projected £4.1m overspend was disappointing, a lot of the reasons behind it were due to one-off and unavoidable costs. Therefore, if these costs were stripped away, the budget would nearly break even which was a significant achievement considering the growth pressures that were present.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the report be received.
- b) That a further budget paper be brought to the next meeting of the Committee and that this include:
 - a. Further information on projected transport savings
 - b. Further information on the work on-going around re-ablement.

46 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

Members received a presentation on the cost benefits of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) from Karen Whitehead, Private Sector Housing Manager. She explained that the presentation was in response to a request from the Committee following an earlier report on DFGs. This had asked that a robust business case be brought which outlined the invest-to-save benefits of DFGs.

Karen Whitehead reported that the service had examined 21 cases where adaptations had been carried out by looking into the following areas to calculate saving/cost avoidance and payback period:

- Cost of care package prior to adaptation
- Cost of adaptation
- Cost of care package after adaptation.

With the use of case studies, Karen Whitehead demonstrated that there were examples of how DFGs could result in cost avoidance, cost savings and other benefits that were not necessarily economic.

In sum, Karen Whitehead explained that whilst it was not possible to generate a reliable figure for the potential cost saving/cost avoidance of DFGs, it was clear from the analysis that there were significant social and economic benefits of independent living.

It was queried that if the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) removed their portion of the funding, would the Council still feel it worthwhile to continue with providing DFGs. Karen Whitehead asserted that removing the DFG budget would have a significant impact on residents as a number of people have relied on the grant in order to remain independent. Patrick Rhoden added that if the Council invested more in DFGs from the capital programme this would likely make a significant revenue saving.

It was questioned how the Council arranged contracts for the work. Karen Whitehead explained that this was where the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) became involved. They helped the resident find a reputable tradesman and then they also supervised the work. It was noted that the resident was free to arrange their own contract but that the HIA would still supervise the work.

Regarding the invest-to-save potential of DFGs, it was queried whether any progress had been made in achieving extra funding. Karen Whitehead reported that the service was undertaking a pilot to look at the short term payback options e.g. stair lifts to explore whether these could be made more widely available. She also noted that the 2012/13 budget for DFGs had increased to £1,500,000 from £1,320,000 in 2011/12.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

47 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members considered the work programme. The Chairman suggested that as there were a number of overlaps with the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, the Scrutiny Officer should distribute both agendas to both Committees for their consideration. An update

was also provided on the Dementia Task and Finish Review as it was noted that the Group were likely to produce their final report in March.

It was also suggested that the next informal meeting of the Committee be brought forward to before Full Council on 23rd February. This was so comment could be made on the draft business plan before it was formally voted on at Full Council.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the work programme be noted.
- b) That the Scrutiny Officer distribute both the Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee agendas to the Membership of both Committees in order to help identify cross-cutting issues.
- c) That the next informal meeting be re-scheduled to a date prior to 23rd February so that comment can be passed on the draft business plan before Full Council.

48 FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS

The Committee gave consideration to the extracts of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.05 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

Councillor M J Simon (Chairman)