

AT A MEETING

- of the -

**HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND
INCLUSION SCRUTINY PANEL** held

at the Council House, Walsall on

20 JUNE 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Oliver (Chair)
Councillor D.Pitt (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ault
Councillor Barton
Councillor Griffiths
Councillor McCracken
Councillor Micklewright
Councillor Robertson
Councillor Woodruff

OFFICERS PRESENT

David Martin (Executive Director Social Care & Supported Housing)
Sue Byard (Assistant Director - Strategic Housing)
Brandon Scott-Omenka (Head of Quality and Performance Management)
Caroline Byrt (Interim Services Redesign Programme Manager - Social Care & Inclusion)
John Greensill (Head of Learning Disabilities - Social Care & Inclusion)
Karen Adderley (Head of Corporate Support)
Nikki Ehlen (Scrutiny Officer)

1/06 APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Kathy McAteer.

2/06 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for this meeting

3/06 DECLERATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Pitt declared an interest as an employee of the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

4/06 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2006, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

5/06 FEEDBACK FROM WORKING GROUPS AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

Councillor Woodruff informed members that the Health Scrutiny Panel had responded to the Black Country Review, this followed a visit to the Manor Hospital. David Martin notified the panel that a resolution on the NHS bank was raised at Council, this was going to the first health scrutiny panel.

6/06 CHANGES TO PANEL REMIT

Adult Social Care

Councillor Oliver informed members that the panel would be receiving presentations from officers on service areas within the remit of the panel.

John Greensill (Joint Head of Learning Disability Services) introduced himself to the panel and presented an overview of the Adult Social Care Services.

(annexed)

David Martin explained to the panel that it was a common feature of local authorities with responsibility for social services to be under huge financial pressure. David stated that adult care services had successfully managed an overspend in the previous financial year, but in the coming financial year the service faced major budget pressures. He further explained that budget pressures were a result of demographic change and changing expectations from service users. These pressures included an increased population of older people, and an increased population of young adults with learning disabilities. These service users expected increased choice about their care and had an understanding of their entitlement to services. David concluded by stating that members should be mindful of these issues at the budget scrutiny meeting.

Councillor McCracken discussed the role of the voluntary sector in assisting the reduction of pressure on the budget. John Greensill thanked Councillor McCracken for her suggestion and emphasised that the voluntary sector has a unique and major role to play in working as a partner to the council to provide services.

Councillor Robertson expressed the view that a robust voluntary sector was vital. Members discussed the role of the anti-poverty unit and which scrutiny panel remit it fell under. Councillor Griffiths confirmed that the scrutiny of benefits fell under the remit of the Corporate Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Councillor Pitt asked officers if the cost of this financial burden had been estimated. David Martin said that it was estimated, at the most £4 million and at least £2 million, as a challenge to be managed. He added that balancing the books was to come at a cost to services.

Strategic Housing

Sue Byard (Assistant Director Strategic Housing - Housing Services) introduced herself and presented an overview of Strategic Housing.

(annexed)

Councillor Pitt enquired about the progress of the adapted properties database. Sue Byard explained that officers were working with voluntary sector organisations to compile a database across all tenures to match adaptations in houses to peoples needs; Sue informed the panel that a project manager had been appointed and updates could be provided to the panel.

Councillor Pitt asked if it was financially viable to recycle adaptations from vacated properties. Sue Byard explained that this was done as much as possible, where it was viable.

Councillor Robertson asked if there were any mechanisms in place to prevent homelessness as opposed to those which reduce homelessness. Sue Byard explained that a prevention agenda exists, which reduces the number of homeless applications. This attempts to ensure that those that enter the system do not re-enter it.

Councillor McCracken asked if the register of adaptations duplicated any existing work done by other organisations. Sue Byard informed the panel that this process has been inclusive of partners and agencies.

Councillor Oliver mentioned the housing action plan had been considered by the regeneration scrutiny panel in the previous municipal year, he enquired about any other aspects that had been looked at by scrutiny previously. Sue Byard explained that a report on the action plan had been to the regeneration panel had last been informed in February when all the actions had been completed and the group ended.

Corporate Support

David Martin explained that there were going to be some imminent changes to corporate support. This was that elements clustered together in the policy unit were to be devolved to service areas. He further explained that some aspects of policy were conducted by corporate support but not all aspects were. He stated that this should be dealt with by a central unit or all aspects should be devolved to service areas. In consideration of this the corporate support team was going to be dissolved, and therefore would no longer be part of the remit for this scrutiny panel. This will be further clarified in a report to Council on 3 July. David said that members were still able to receive a presentation from Karen Adderley on corporate support service area.

Officers clarified some issues raised by members.

7/06 KEY DISCUSSION ITEMS

Establishment of sub-committee and work groups

The chairman agreed to consider the items on the agenda headed Establishment of Sub-Committees and Work Groups in conjunction with this item.

The reports of the Executive Director on Scoping of Work Programme 2006/7 and Establishment of Sub-Committees and Work Groups were submitted: -

(see annexed).

Members noted the work of the panel during 2005/6 municipal year and noted the proposals for scoping additional items for the work programme for 2006/7 municipal year.

RESOLVED: -

That the Health Scrutiny Panel be re-established for the municipal year 2006/7 with full delegated powers to consider all matters relating to the Health Service within the borough. That the membership be as follows: -

- Councillor D. Pitt
 - Councillor Woodruff
 - Councillor Micklewright
 - Councillor Robertson
- b) That other core members within the Health Service be as previously agreed during the 2005/6 municipal year, as follows:-
- Director of Public Health (permanent advisor).
 - Executive Director, Social Care and Supported Housing.
 - Representative from Patient Forum.
 - Representative from PALS NHS.
 - Representative from PALS PCT.
 - Representative from Independent Claims and Advisory Service.
- c) That as previously agreed the adhoc members be a representative of: -
- 1) The Local Medical Committee
 - 2) The Walsall Hospital NHS Trust
 - 3) The Director of Health and Social Care (PCT)
 - 4) Together with other co-options on the basis of the requirement of the work programme.
- d) That Councillor Woodruff be appointed chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2006/7
- e) That the Health Scrutiny Panel appoints a vice-chair at their first meeting.

Scoping of work programme 2006/07

The report of the Executive Director was submitted: -

(annexed).

Members noted the work of the scrutiny panel during the 2005/6 municipal year. Members also considered items for inclusion on the work programme for the 2006/07 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the following areas of work to be included in the programme for the 2006/07 municipal year : -

1) Community meals

The chair requested that the panel receive more detailed updates to future meetings and supported further involvement as the procurement process progressed. Members also requested that stakeholders, who had previously attended the meetings considering community meals, were invited to the next relevant meeting.

2) Redesign and re-provision of older peoples services

The chair requested that the panel consider this item at the next stage of development when a preferred bidder and options for the service are identified in September.

3) Assessment of Day Care Services for people with learning disabilities

The chair requested that as soon as the review document on the assessment of day care services for people with learning disabilities was final that it came back to the panel and the views of shareholders were shared.

4) Performance monitoring reports

The panel agreed to receive a selection of appropriate performance indicators including any exception reports, throughout the municipal year.

Update on the current position of re-provision of community meals

Caroline Byrt introduced herself to the panel and gave a verbal update on the current position of the re-provision of community meals. Caroline recapped on the decision by cabinet to provide a hot food delivery to people with particular dependency needs and a new aspect of the service was to provide a frozen food service for less dependent service users.

Caroline explained to the panel that the service was currently provided by an in-house provider, and that this was being remodelled to provide two types of meals. A standard procurement approach had been used; following the advertisement of the tender 8 organisations had responded.

It was explained that key attributes of these 8 organisations had been evaluated to create a short list of 5 organisations. Caroline stated that although the short list of organisations was not in the public domain she could provide the chair with this information. Councillor Oliver confirmed that he wanted to be provided with a list of short listed organisations.

Caroline explained that the tender documents were currently subject to final ratification and review by legal services, and that within 2 – 3 weeks the contracts would be ready to be sent out to the short listed organisations. She also informed the panel that service user groups would be consulted, and would take part in food tasting and complete questionnaires. Following this the tender would be awarded late autumn.

Councillor Griffiths asked officers if Walsall Council currently provided this service. Caroline Byrt confirmed that currently this service was provided by an in-house provider. Councillor Griffiths asked if it was possible for this service to be provided more competitively by a profit making company. He added that the nutritional information of the food should also be considered, and he asked how this would be ensured.

David Martin informed the panel that from a value for money (vfm) perspective the in-house provider didn't provide a cost-effective service and added that it had been benchmarked as the most expensive. He further explained that the transport costs for this were expensive and it was a one-size fits all approach with no ethnic sensitivity and little choice. David further explained that service users do not judge the nutritional value of the food, but that they had to meet European guidelines. He told the panel that officers were happy to share the process of consultation with members.

Councillor Oliver requested a more detailed overview to the next meeting. David Martin stated that it may not be possible to present the panel with a substantial update until the panel meeting in September. Councillor Oliver requested that when a more detailed overview was presented to the panel, that stakeholders who had been present at the previous meetings where this was discussed were invited.

Councillor Oliver suggested that members considered any other items for the work programme and brought them back to the panel.

Councillor Micklewright asked if adaptations could be taken back from privately owned homes. Officers replied that this was not possible but if the property belongs to Walsall Housing Group (WHG), it was possible to try to use the property to house somebody with a similar need.

RESOLVED

- a) That Councillor Oliver be provided with a short list of applicants to the tender process.
- b) Those stakeholders who had previously attended the panel be invited to the next meeting that considers community meals.

White Paper – Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A new direction for community services.

David Martin informed the panel that this paper was a collection of principles and issues, and the implications of this depend upon the direction in which the

government decides to push it forward. He added that road shows were to be held to inform local government what the government intends the white paper to deliver. David stated that officers would keep the panel informed.

08/06 Performance and monitoring items

Brandon Scott-Omenka introduced himself to the panel and discussed performance issues inside the directorates. He explained that statutory legal returns lead to the star rating, and that he hoped to bring a mix of annual inspections and ongoing performance reviews.

David Martin suggested that a document proposing a list of performance indicators was brought to the panel. Councillor Oliver thanked David and requested that this information together with exception reports were brought to future meetings of the panel.

RESOLVED

That the panel receive a proposal document containing performance indicators relevant to this panel, including any exception reports.

09/06 Training opportunities

The panel noted the training opportunities. Councillor Pitt requested that training opportunities are distributed as soon as possible.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m.

Chairman

Date