

AT A MEETING  
- of the -  
**HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND  
INCLUSION SCRUTINY PANEL** held  
at the Council House, Walsall on **22  
March 2007** at 6.00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillor D.Pitt	(Chair)
Councillor Ault	
Councillor Barton	
Councillor Micklewright	
Councillor Robertson	
Councillor Woodruff	

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Sue Byard	Assistant Director - Strategic Housing
Karen Reilly	Interim Head of Adult Service
Andrew Flood	Procurement Specialist - Social Care & Inclusion
Lloyd Brodrick	Service Manager Older People
Mark Wade	Housing Standards and Improvement Manager

Nikki Ehlen	Scrutiny Officer
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**ALSO PRESENT**

Ray Walters	T & GWU
Graham Parker	Chief Executive Walsall Voluntary Action

**44/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Griffiths and Oliver.

**45/07 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting.

**46/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

#### 47/07 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of meetings held on 30 November 2006 and 25 January 2007 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

#### 48/07 HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillor Pitt invited Councillor Woodruff to provide feedback on the Health Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Woodruff informed the panel that the last meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel had focused on the hospitals foundation trust status and a working group had been established to allow the panel to provide its third party commentary on the healthcare commission standards. Councillor Woodruff stated that she felt that the Health Scrutiny Panel needed more meeting dates, but stated that she had raised this in the scrutiny questionnaire and would raise this at the annual scrutiny event.

Members were provided with feedback on Cabinets decision; -

Modernisation of day care services for people with learning disabilities

(1) That the plan to modernise day services for people with a learning disability be endorsed.

(2) That the Health and Social Care Scrutiny and Performance Panel be thanked for their work and support for these proposals.

(3) That Health and Social Care Scrutiny and Performance Panel be provided with updates on progress together with being informed of any significant concerns expressed by service users or carers.

The panel were thanked for their input.

Mark Wade spoke to the presentation (annexed), and informed the panel of areas of disrepair. Councillor Barton clarified that action would now be taken to improve the situation in the area. Mark Wade explained that he was aware that there had been delays in the timetable, but stated that consultation was important.

Sue Byard informed the panel that where there wasn't a need to do any work, residents would be informed. Members were also informed that there was an existing programme of £0.5 million, and that additional money would be spent next year. Councillor Barton stated that she was pleased that something would be done to improve the lives of residents.

Councillor Ault clarified whether repairs would be on houses from the privately rented sector, Walsall Housing Group (WHG) or owner occupied homes. Sue Byard explained that repairs would be carried out on owner occupied and privately rented sector. Councillor Barton clarified that owner occupiers would still be helped. Mark Wade confirmed that this was the case, and emphasised that social housing would not receive repairs, as housing associations could apply for funding independently.

Councillor Robertson stated that mis-conceptions were easily created and it should be ensured that residents were kept informed to avoid damaging community spirit. Mark Wade stated that the timescale of the project planned included consultation with community groups, and that the Council were aware that there was a strong sense of community spirit and they did not want to damage that.

#### 49/07 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Karen Reilly and Sue Byard spoke to the report (annexed).

Councillor Woodruff asked what was in practice to help improve the PARIS system. Karen Reilly explained that figures did not reflect actual practice and that data input into PARIS was not as accurate as it could be. Karen Reilly advised members that a robust action plan was in place and a lead officer would be a champion for improving the PARIS system.

Karen Reilly stated that action plans were in place to deal with problems at the end of the quarter, and that all officers agreed that PARIS needed to be dealt with to further improve.

Councillor Barton stated that she was concerned about the waiting time for assessments as the Council were not aware whether the person needed urgent care or not until they were assessed, and that these people had the right to a quality of life. Karen Reilly explained that although there had been areas of improvement it was not acceptable to wait 6 months.

Councillor Robertson expressed concern about the number of families in temporary accommodation. Sue Byard informed the panel about the sanctuary scheme 'Whisp', which keeps families at risk of domestic abuse within their home. Sue Byard explained that this was intended at removing the perpetrators with legal force. Members were informed that families had a safe room, where police were contacted and that this was a successful system.

Councillor Robertson stated that he was pleased that more victims of domestic violence were being uncovered, and that the Council had a duty to uncover these people as quickly as possible.

#### 50/07 INSPECTION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALSALL ACTION PLAN

Councillor Pitt asked for officer comments on the action plan. Karen Reilly stated that it should be noted that most items were on schedule, other than a few minor slips, Members were advised that the team had done a fantastic job.

Councillor Robertson asked if pressures on hospital discharges were going to get worse, and asked if the Council was working in partnership with the PCT. Karen Reilly explained that pressures within the hospital had been identified by the Social Care and Inclusion directorate and were tied into hospital plans, as partners to influence how care was delivered.

The panel noted the action plan.

## 51/07 THE REPROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL AND DAY CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Officers advised members that this report picked up outstanding issues raised at the last panel meeting. The panel were informed that they were committed to ensuring that the scrutiny panel influenced the way forward before submission to Cabinet.

Members were informed that this process was moving on rapidly and that this was the scrutiny panel's opportunity to feed into the report to Cabinet on 18 April 2007, the panel were informed that the key recommendation was that staff were subject to TUPE. In terms of the best interests of the Council and staff it was the most secure option. Members were advised that following concern from Cabinet and the scrutiny panel about pension rights, officers could confirm that pension rights would not be altered. Officers stated that Housing 21 accepted that the TUPE option was in the best interests of staff.

Karen Reilly informed the panel that an application had been submitted to the housing corporation for grant support to the 5 Extra Care Housing schemes, and that these had formally been approved for inclusion within the Housing Corporations forward allocation funding pool.

Members were invited to make recommendations, and advised that there would be a move towards signing a contract with Housing 21 in July 2007.

Councillor Pitt clarified that pension rights were identical and officers confirmed that this was the case. Members asked how serious the threat of legal act was if TUPE was not chosen. Karen Reilly explained that previous examples from other councils would suggest that there was a significant risk.

Councillor Robertson stated that Housing 21 appeared to operate a mixture of secondment and TUPE. Andy Flood explained that Housing 21 had expressed the view that they preferred secondment, as the risk to them was reduced but this created an increased risk to the Council and Housing 21 have agreed to proceed on basis of TUPE.

Andy Flood stated that as the project developed there were demographic changes, and that this had been addressed by producing units that could accommodate more than one person.

Members stated that this was an exciting opportunity for older people within Walsall. Councillor Barton expressed the opinion that older people should be kept together. Officers stated that this would be the aim throughout.

## 52/07 END OF YEAR REVIEW

Members discussed the end of year review and discussed work streams. Councillor Woodruff stated that the Obesity Working Group needed to be added to the Health Scrutiny Panel work description.

Members agreed the content of the end of year review document.

## RESOLVED

The Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel resolve that;

The Obesity Working Group is added to the end of year review.

## 53/07 CONSIDERATION OF SERVICE ISSUES

Karen Reilly informed members that the Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) had recommended that the scrutiny panel received a budget update at an earlier stage in the year. Karen Reilly updated members on general themes that had budget implications in the service area.

Members were informed that the Social, Care, and Inclusion directorate were facing a potential £1.2 million - £1.4 million overspend. This meant that the challenge for the next financial year would be starting with a £1 million deficit. It was emphasised that officers had worked all year to bring the deficit down and that recovery plans continued.

Karen Reilly advised members that it was unlikely that community meals would achieve the estimated £200,000 savings. This was because of the cost of meeting the needs of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community needs, and the time it was taking to secure the contract.

Members were advised that the cost of caring for people in a home was increasing and was now more expensive. Demographic growth and the transformation programme were also stated as financial pressures. Karen Reilly explained that certain contracts including the domiciliary care contract were spending a considerable amount of money on domiciliary care.

Members were advised that the PCT would experience a £0.5 million reduction in their budget, which meant that the Council would be hit by this budget reduction.

Karen Reilly advised members that the Council needed to think carefully about the 'Links to Work' business strategy, as this could generate income. It was also stated that a review of fairer charging was an option, and the debt recovery system needed to be considered.

The financial pressure of the younger adults disability service (YADS) was discussed as these adults needed a high level of care. To reduce this pressure the service would be considering all contracts to ensure that they achieve value for money and were fit for purpose.

Members were advised that the service would be reviewing contracts to achieve a budget reduction. The panel thanked Karen Reilly.

## 54/07 FORWARD PLAN

The panel noted the forward plan.

### TERMINATION OF MEETING

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m.

Chairman .....

Date .....