

SOCIAL CARE & INCLUSION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Monday 30 November 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

Panel Members present Councillor Oliver (Chair)
Councillor Ault
Councillor Martin
Councillor Paul
Councillor Woodruff
Councillor Barton

Portfolio Holder for Health Social Care and Inclusion present Councillor
McCracken

Also present:

Leader of the Councillor Councillor Bird

**Portfolio Holder for Health Social Care and Inclusion for
Finance & Personnel** Councillor Towe

Officers present

Dave Martin	Executive Director – Social Care and Inclusion
Margaret Willcox	Assistant Director – Adult Services
Vicky Buckley	Head of Corporate Finance
Steph Simcox	Finance Manager
Brandon Scott-Omenka	Performance and Outcomes Manager
Matthew Underhill	Scrutiny Officer

50/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for the meeting from Councillor Clarke.

51/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting.

52/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

53/09 SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

The Performance and Outcomes Manager introduced the report (annexed) explaining that it reflected the mid-year year position and also formed part of the detail of the Portfolio Plan contained within the Draft Revenue Budget report. He highlighted that indicator D54 Equipment/ adaptations delivered within 7 day was Red under the “RAG” traffic light system. A working group is in place and is seeking to determine why in more than 30% of instances the delivery of equipment is not on time. The working group has removed a number of smaller variables, including the time taken to respond to referrals, and some instances of misapplied guidance. A review is now being undertaken to tackle

delayed deliveries which impact the speed at which the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) is able to respond to referrals. In response to a Panel query the Performance and Outcomes Manager explained that of two thousand seven hundred referrals, approximately eight hundred have been subject to delays ranging from one to twenty-eight days, but significantly longer in some cases. The Chair observed that the ICES had historical performance issues and that it was important that problems within the process were pinpointed. In terms of monitoring this issue the Executive Director advised the Panel that the following quarterly performance scorecard would provide a suitable period to support effective monitoring of the difficulties highlighted and assist in determining if the current trend was improving. However, he also explained that proposals were being developed to move the service to a retail model, in part to reflect the introduction of Personalisation. This approach would involve the Council working with local commercial providers who would undertake the supply side of the service. A possible approach might involve an individual being given a voucher for equipment which they would then be able to present to a supplier. A further benefit of such an approach would be to release efficiencies within the Social Care Directorate. Officers agreed that any such proposals would be brought to a future Panel meeting for consideration.

Further Red indicators related to the provision of intermediate care packages in residential and non-residential settings, including work undertaken to prevent hospital admission and facilitate timely hospital discharge. A challenge exists in recording activity in relation to these indicators as significant activity is undertaken by health partners that cannot be performance recorded by the Council. It is also possible that performance is further impacted by the current suspension of contracts with a number of providers. The Frail Elderly Care Pathway review is seeking to deliver improved outcomes for service users and its activity will include a review of the commissioning of these services. The Performance and Outcomes Manager concluded by explaining that C72 Admissions to residential/ nursing care were currently Amber and these would be closely monitored with any issues highlighted to the Panel. However, he also pointed out that in respect of NI 132, Timelines of social care assessment, Walsall Council had achieved the highest score of sixty-four authorities. The Chair acknowledged this performance but also emphasised the importance of monitoring the performance of assessments during the winter months.

The Executive Director observed that effective improvement in performance was better achieved with the current approach taken by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), whereby a movement in an indicator is not automatically viewed as bad news but instead as requiring explanation.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. officers will continue to provide the quarterly performance scorecard to assist the Panel in identifying and monitoring key performance issues;**
- and**
- 2. officers will provide guidance to a future Panel meeting regarding proposals to use a retail model for the provision of equipment to service users.**

54/09 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 FOR SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

The Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion introduced the report (annexed) explaining that it set out budget proposals for the next financial year. The report also set out the context and strategic targets for the portfolio. She guided the Panel that the initial budget position, as brought forward from last year, was £71.277m. However once inflation, and other factors including budget refresh and budget pressures are reflected less efficiencies, savings and income generation the draft net budget requirement was £67.593m. This meant that the portfolio would be starting the next financial year with a lower budget than in the current year. A Panel Member expressed the view that given the budgetary pressures that existed as well as the level of savings required, the proposals represented a positive outcome for service users. He also suggested that the introduction of Personalisation should assist in delivering further efficiencies within services.

The Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion provided further guidance regarding the budget proposals:

- Services within Social Care and Inclusion are influence-led and they are seeking to meet as yet unidentified growth;
- As the demand for services grows a further challenge emerges as the cost of providing these services over recent years has risen by 23%;
- The budget pressures are evidence of changing service user needs within local communities. This includes an increase of £0.570m in demand for mental health services. Across mental health, learning disabilities and old people services demand pressures equate to £0.76m of investment requested;
- In response to a Panel query the Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion explained that a review was being undertaken of care packages. The process would reflect the recognition of the benefit of Telecare as a means of allowing individuals to remain within their own homes. Enabling an individual to remain within familiar surroundings was an important method of maintaining mental health rather than the less desirable outcome of being cared for in a facility. Officers also agreed with the Panel that there should be better understanding of dementia needs and that the development of a national dementia strategy should assist in this process. In addition, the PCT had made effective use of £150m of funding for the development of the local dementia strategy meaning that Walsall enjoyed an approach in advance of many other areas;
- The Council Leader highlighted the importance of working effectively with local partners to achieve efficient and effective service delivery and avoid costly duplication;
- Officers agreed to provide further guidance regarding the impact on Learning Disabilities provision of pooled budget arrangements with NHS Walsall;

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Personnel and the Head of Corporate Finance joined the meeting at 7:00pm.

- The Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion explained that the full year effect of 2009/10 savings into 2010/11 represented £1.444m, with £4.994m of additional savings proposed for 2010/11;
- In respect of fees and charges there will be a 26p increase in the cost of meals-on-wheels, from £2.49 to £2.75 per meal. A Panel Member expressed strong objections to any decisions that might impact on the provision of the service as it

was one method for assisting in helping to ensure the well-being of vulnerable members of the community. The Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion and the Leader of the Council explained that the decision was in contrast to action at other local authorities which includes doubling the charge or no longer providing the service. The Leader of the Council added that while the increase was not intended to be cost-prohibitive, with the advent of Personalisation individuals would have the freedom to purchase meals from other sources if they did not think that meals on wheels offered value for money. The Chair expressed the view that descriptions of savings proposals should be expressed in monetary terms as well as percentages to enable the Panel to assess the impact of proposals;

- In response to a Panel query, the Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion acknowledged that individuals do not like change and are likely to feel upset, disappointed and frightened at the suggestion that the levels of service that they receive will be re-evaluated. However the budget proposals were based on an effort to seek to be fairer and more equitable, as currently some service users are receiving a very high level of service provision compared to others. It was now important to ensure that the Council provides the most suitable level of care in accordance with need and within the budget. This means that services would be funded according to assessed need rather than aspiration. The Executive Director also explained that the assessments would not take place incrementally and that the team undertaking this activity would ensure a clear and consistent approach. The Leader of the Council further explained that any individuals will be given the level care as required by their assessment;
- The Portfolio Holder for Health, Social Care and Inclusion guided the Panel that the recently launched Access and Response Centre, which operates twenty hours a day, seven days a week, would support more efficient, effective and coordinated services;
- The Chair concluded that he welcomed some positive proposals within the draft budget although there were also a number of areas for concern.

Resolved:

That the following recommendations be reported to the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel and Cabinet for inclusion for the Social Care and Health Portfolio for the budget for 2010/11, that the Panel:

- 1. note the budget presentation received;**
- 2. request that Council continues to prioritise social care for vulnerable adults within its budgetary process;**
- 3. seek hypothetical case studies to show the potential practical impact of proposals on individuals at the Panel's meeting on 18 January 2010;**

and

- 4. request that the impact on learning disability of the pooled budget with NHS Walsall be further explained at the Panel's meeting on 18 January 2010.**

55/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair confirmed the date of the next meeting as the 18 January 2010.

The meeting terminated at 7:25 pm

DRAFT