

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Social Care & Inclusion Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 18 January 2010

RE: WALSALL LINK UPDATE

Purpose

To inform the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel of progress since the procurement of Black Country Housing Group (BCHG) as replacement LINK host.

Progress

- The LINK Board met with the new host on 12 November 2009.
- It was apparent that there is significant confusion over the roles of the Board, host and Walsall Council and this caused the meeting to be confrontational and dysfunctional.
- The LINK Board expressed their concern over the actions of the new host in terms of staffing arrangements put in place and accommodation secured. The Board had not been involved in the decision-making relating to these issues.
- The Project Manager appointed by BCHG has since resigned from their position. BCHG are in the process of re-recruiting.
- Advice is being sought from the Department of Health over the role of the Board and the host and the parameters within which the Board may operate. There may be issues over whether the Board was appropriately established by the previous host. The outcome of this advice will be made available to the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel when it is available.
- A meeting between the Board and the Department of Health has been arranged for Monday 25 January 2010.
- The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday 14 January 2010.
- In summary, there is a significant amount of work required to enable the LINK, its Board and host to establish effectively.

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