

## **SOCIAL CARE & INCLUSION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

MONDAY 17 January 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor T Oliver (Chair)  
Councillor A Paul (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor I Azam  
Councillor J Barton  
Councillor M Burley  
Councillor B Douglas-Maul  
Councillor L Rattigan  
Councillor D Turner

### **Portfolio Holder Present**

Councillor B McCracken

### **Health Panel Members Present**

Councillor I Robertson

### **Other Members Present**

Councillor M Bird (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor C Towe (Portfolio holder - Finance and Personnel)

### **Officers Present**

Paul Davies – Executive Director, Adult Social Care & Inclusion  
Lloyd Haynes – Finance Account Manager  
Andy Rust – Head of Vulnerable Adults and Joint Commissioning Unit  
Ian Staples – Joint Strategic Commissioning Manager – Disability Services  
Brandon Scott-Omenka – Performance and Outcomes Manager (Social Care and Inclusion)  
Nikki Gough – Scrutiny Officer

### **58/11 APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for non-attendance for the duration of the meeting.

## **59/11 SUBSTITUTIONS**

No substitutions were received for the duration of the meeting.

## **60/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

## **61/11 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.

### **Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2010, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

***The Panel agreed to receive Item 7 prior to Items 5 and 6.***

## **62/11 REVISED DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2011/12 FOR CONSULTATION**

The Panel were informed that this was an update on budget proposals that were taken to the November Scrutiny Panel. Slight changes to grants and a movement in the overall settlement was described. The draft Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2013/14 for Social Care and Inclusion was set out in Appendix 2.

Councillor Oliver suggested that the primary way for the directorate to make savings was through the benefit based charging system. The Finance Account Manager stated that this should increase income by £2½ million, there would also be a charge introduced for the community alarm system. Members were informed that a saving of £3 million would be made from re-aligning the Social Work Team and provider services. The Executive Director informed Members that two sets of consultation had been completed with staff on the re-structure and public consultation on benefit based charging. The consultation had been commended as a well planned and organised consultation.

Officers emphasised that service users would not pay until they received their benefits and backdated charges would not be implemented. Members were informed that the Welfare Rights Unit was offering advice to members of the public. Members asked how confident officers were in the capacity of the Welfare Rights Unit. The Executive Director clarified that the Council were investing in the Welfare Rights Unit to ensure they could meet future demand. It was estimated that one third of people would pay less, one third of people would pay the same and one third of people would pay more. Officers stated that some of the savings came from the fact that efficiencies were generated. The Panel were informed that the top charge for care was £89 per week and people would only pay this if they received the relevant benefit.

The Executive Director informed Members that community law does not allow for blanket change. Councillor Oliver asked officers to collate together where neighbouring authorities were in the process.

Officers stated that there was a system of appeal and that the Councils were adhering to the guidelines and regulations.

Officers informed Members that the income generated from community alarm systems had received universal approval. This was a new response service to maintain people at home. The charge was £3 per week, if people had the income.

The Panel were informed of the introduction of a charge of 7.5% for adaptations to a house once it was sold. However, there would be a capital programme of £3 million investment to allow homes to be adapted. A discussion regarding the charge of 7.5% revealed that when the home was adapted, there was a charge on the property on land registry.

Paul Davies declared an interest as the regional lead for telecare.

Members were informed that in terms of community alarms, the key holder would be a member of staff who would respond in 20 minutes.

**Resolved;**

1. That the Panel accept the current direction of travel in terms of the proposed direction of travel regarding re-structuring of services, however, concerns remain over the possible impact of some of the proposed changes on individual service users, this being difficult to fully assess at present
2. Panel Members are provided with information on how neighbouring authorities were charging for care

**63/11 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD 2010-11 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER AND UPDATE REPORT**

The Performance and Outcomes Manager (Social Care and Inclusion) explained that there was a shift in responsibility in setting targets from the centre to Walsall. This may impact on how information would be presented to the Scrutiny Panel. Where indicators were red, there were detailed corrective action plans attached.

**Resolved;**

That revised targets are taken to scrutiny for the panel to determine which targets they wish to scrutinise.

#### **64/11 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN WALSALL**

The Joint Strategic Commissioning Manager for Disabilities presented to the Panel (annexed) and informed Members that Walsall was currently the poorest performing Council in the West Midlands for employment opportunities for this group. However, a new initiative had been put in place to increase the number of people in paid employment from 2 to 50 by the end of March, 2011.

Officers emphasised that their intention was to get people into meaningful employment and sustain their employment.

Members asked how confident officers were in the ability of stakeholders to assist people into employment. Officers assured Members that partners would be working in a better way in the future to assist adults with learning disabilities in Walsall.

Councillor Oliver asked for an update on this issue at the April panel meeting.

#### **Resolved;**

That an update on employment opportunities for adults with learning disabilities in Walsall is taken to the panel in April.

#### **65/11 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 AND FORWARD PLAN**

The work programme and Forward Plan was noted.

**66/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 16 February, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 8.05 p.m.

Chair:

Date: