

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

13 November 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

### **Panel Members present**

Councillor Oliver (Chair)  
Councillor Ault (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Bird  
Councillor Paul  
Councillor Pitt  
Councillor Robertson  
Councillor Woodruff

### **Portfolio holders present**

Councillor Barbara McCracken

### **Also present**

Councillor Ian Shires, Monzar Miah

### **Officers present**

Dave Martin- Interim Chief Executive (Director of Adults Social Care)  
Sue Byard- Assistant Director, Strategic Housing  
Margaret Willcox- Interim Head of Adult Operations  
Julie Metcalf- Head of Younger Adults & Disabilities  
Tracey Simcox- Acting Lead Officer, Supporting People  
Nikki Ehlen- Scrutiny Officer  
Colin Teasdale- Performance and Scrutiny Officer

### **48/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Barton

### **49/07 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitution(s) for the duration of this meeting.

### **50/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

### **51/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS**

Councillor Robertson asked for an update on price list for adaptations that had been requested at the last meeting and noted on page 8 of the minutes.

Sue Byard said there were confidentiality issue with releasing this price list but that a presentation due to be delivered to the next panel at the meeting on the 29 November would give more detail on the work the service has been doing on costs.

## **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2007, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

### **52/07 FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan as at 10 October 2007 was submitted

Councillor Bird commented that he felt the forward plan was deficient as there was not enough information on there to know whether scrutiny needed to look at the matter.

Councillor Pitt commented that he had attended a training session on the call-in process where they had discussed the forward plan and raised the possibility of an electronic plan with embedded documents form which you could get more information.

Dave Martin commented that he was aware of some discussions around this but wasn't aware if anything had been progressed. He undertook to take this up as an issue.

## **Resolved**

That the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel

- Note the forward plan of 10 October 2007
- Recommend that more information should be contained within the forward plan and the possibility of an electronic version with embedded documents be looked at.

### **53/07 Mental Health Reconfiguration**

Nikki Ehlen gave an overview of the current position and informed the panel that it was the view of the Health Scrutiny Panel that the proposed reconfiguration was a 'substantial variation' as defined by the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and as such there was a duty to form a joint committee with Dudley Council. If a joint committee was not formed the panel would lose their right to respond to the consultation.

Nikki Ehlen asked the panel to agree to form a joint committee and to agree membership. The request was for 5 members from Walsall, comprising of 3 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat.

Councillor Bird asked if membership had to go to council for ratification.

Nikki Ehlen advised the panel that she had consulted with the Head of Constitutional Services on this matter and was informed that power to appoint membership lay with this panel and it did not need to go to full Council. This was because the committee was being formed to respond to a one-off consultation and was not forming any new powers.

Councillor Oliver informed the panel that the Labour Group had agreed not to pursue their right to political balance due to the timescales involved. He proposed that the

membership should consist of the current members of the Health Panel plus one further nomination from the Conservative Group.

Councillor Pitt confirmed he would be willing to take a place on the committee as the extra member from the Conservative Group.

Councillor Robertson said he had heard there had been two public consultation events on this issue and asked Margaret Willcox how this had been advertised and what the attendance had been like as it would be useful for the panel to know what the public concerns were.

Margaret Willcox responded that the events had been advertised through the press office using the usual channels and whilst the turn out from the public had been low the responses had been vociferous. Concerns had mainly centred around making sure that local money would still be spend locally and over whether they would have to travel to receive treatment currently get locally.

## **Resolved**

That the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel

- Agree to form a joint committee with Dudley Council for the purpose of responding to the consultation on the reconfiguration of mental health services within the two boroughs
- Agree the terms of reference for the joint committee
- Agree that membership of the panel should consist of the following members:
  - Councillor Woodruff            Liberal Democrat
  - Councillor Robertson        Labour
  - Councillor Micklewright     Conservative
  - Councillor Paul                Conservative
  - Councillor D Pitt              Conservative

## **54/07 HOLLYBANK HOUSE REPROVISION**

Julie Metcalf gave a presentation summarising the findings of the review report of Hollybank House. (Annexed)

Councillor Bird wished it to be placed on record that he was pleased Councillor McCracken had attended the last meeting of this panel, had listened and took scrutiny's message back to cabinet.

Councillor Woodruff said that under resource and legal considerations it stated that there was work underway to identify costings and asked if this was being done for all options.

Julie Metcalf responded that the costings were purely for the capital works for the building and not for any of the options specifically which, at the request of this panel, they were not pursuing until consultation had taken place. She said that it was important not to see this as being just about the fabric of the building; it was about giving younger adults with disabilities more opportunity to live independently as part of the community.

With the best will in the world this could not be recreated in the current set-up and they had to plan services for the future that would be an attractive option for respite care.

Councillor Bird said that the report stated the home had an upper age limit of 65 and asked what happened to older residents.

Julie Metcalf said that this process was the same as it had been in the past, a review was undertaken at the age of 65 to assess a persons needs and determine what would suit them best.

Monzur Miah commented that if you had lived somewhere fro 20 years you would not like it if told you were being kicked out just because you were now 65.

Julie Metcalf stated that time was always taken over moving people on and consideration given to the individual's wishes and needs, it was not a case of throwing them out on the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Councillors made a number of comments on the need to respect the community aspect to Hollybank house; a number of the residents had lived together there for a number of years and formed close bonds it was important not to break this community up.

Councillors also raised the problem of residents becoming institutionalised, change was scary for anyone and for the most vulnerable it could be particularly traumatic, there was a consensus that this had to be handled sensitively and over an extended period of time.

Dave Martin commented that from what had been said he could see two main challenges, one doing the right thing by people currently in there and secondly moving forward to provide a facility that met the needs of the community and prevented another generation of people from becoming institutionalised. Whilst there may be 32 people in Hollybank who wanted things to stay the same there were hundreds in the community who were not currently getting a service who would benefit from new facilities, it was important they had a voice too. He felt they could keep options open by keeping people there in diminishing numbers but not to create a new generation.

Councillor Oliver commented that the objective of social care was to help people to live fulfilling and independent lives. He would like to see a move towards promoting independence but with consideration to the individual and the community together. They did have to be brave to get something better and should focus on the future but get there in a sensitive way. Whilst they would never please all the people all the time the key lesson was to involve residents and carers every step of the way and the job of this scrutiny panel was to recommend how they would like to see it progress.

Councillor McCracken said she welcomed the comments from the panel. She wanted to confirm that no decision had yet been made by cabinet but that there was a national driver for change and Hollybank House represented an outdated mode of institutionalised care. She recognised that change was scary but that it was essential and that they had to handle it in a sensitive way. She said she was grateful to Councillor Shires for the call-in as wanted scrutiny's input.

Councillor Bird said that he did not see an option of no long term places but that option 2 allowed flexibility to protect current users but offer more respite care, then as long

term users move on they could reallocate places to respite care but keep the flexibility to be able to offer longer term places.

Councillor Ault said there was a need to plan with people so they knew where they were going to be and suggested asking service users to give a presentation to the panel on what it is they wanted.

Councillor McCracken reiterated that there was no suggestion that any change would be instant and that it could take years; this was just the beginning of the process.

Councillor Oliver commented on the coldness of the report as it focussed on the place and not the people and whilst he understood the reasons for this it was essential that a more person centred approach was adopted at this stage.

Dave Martin commented that if the service ended up “placing” anyone anywhere they did not want to be then they would have got it badly wrong. They had to work with people, offering them choices and matching services to their needs and wishes. He said that it was his understanding that the original call-in had been about the process and not the content.

Councillor Shires confirmed this and expressed a view that the process had started at the wrong end by going to cabinet first. He said he felt there should be more flexibility than just the 3 options and there was a need for it to be person centred.

Councillor Oliver asked for the panel to be given further information on how the consultation was taking place so they could oversee this.

## **Resolved**

That the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel receive a further report on the consultation process.

## **55/07 SUPPORTING PEOPLE INSPECTION**

*Councillor Oliver left the meeting at 7.25pm and Councillor Ault took the chair.*

Sue Byard introduced Tracy Simcox, the Acting Lead Officer for Supporting People, to give a presentation on the results of the Supporting People Inspection (annexed.)

Councillor Robertson asked if recommendations were on track.

Sue Byard said they would be bringing the action plan to the panel meeting on the 29 November. The positive thing to come out of the inspection was that there were no weaknesses identified that they were not already aware of and addressing. The issue was just that these were not embedded when compared to supporting people services nationally. The improvement plan will do more than just what was identified by the inspection and gave a roadmap to excellence.

Dave Martin commented that he had been in the feedback meeting in his role as interim chief executive and given how relatively positive the verbal feedback had been with regard to progress already made he challenged the score of no stars. Unfortunately the

inspectors were tied to their judgement because things were not embedded and could not score for planned improvements even though they recognised these. He added that the score of no stars did mean that they were now given extra resources to the CLG in order to improve.

Councillor McCracken welcomed the opportunity to bring the improvement plan to scrutiny for their input and added that she was frustrated that the inspectors had been so positive verbally but in terms of scoring they had not been able to give credit for the work in progress because it wasn't embedded.

Councillor Bird commented that this should mean they would see dramatic improvement next time and the Walsall Supporting People team could be one of the most improved nationally.

### **Resolved**

That the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel agree to receive and monitor the Supporting People Improvement Plan.

### **56/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 19 November 2007

The meeting terminated at 7.45pm.

Chair:

Date: