

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

THURSDAY 10 June 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor T Oliver (Chair)  
Councillor A Paul (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor D Turner  
Councillor J Barton  
Councillor M Burley  
Councillor B Douglas-Maul  
Councillor V Woodruff

### **Officers Present**

Paul Davies – Executive Director, Adult Social Care & Inclusion  
Andy Rust – Head of Joint Commissioning Unit  
Matthew Underhill – Scrutiny Officer

### **01/10 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors O'Hare and Griffiths

### **02/10 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting.

### **03/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

### **04/10 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.

### **Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2010, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

## 05/10 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Panel considered the proposed work programme items for the new municipal year. The main points of the briefing and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- The scrutiny officer briefly set out the findings of a survey of local residents to determine which issues they wanted the Panel to consider during the municipal year. Amongst the areas that were highlighted as most important were funding future care for the elderly and personalisation;
- **Links to Work:** The Head of the Joint Commissioning Unit explained that in relation to Links to Work proposals were now being considered to rationalise the service, including a reduction in the number of units that are currently supported. It has also been determined that it was not appropriate for support provided to Links to Work service users to be undertaken differently than for others seeking employment. It was intended that there would be integration of specialist and general employment services to create universal employment services. The Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Inclusion explained that the approach taken to Links to Work was illustrative of personalisation and the wrapping of services around an individual to help them fulfil their potential;
- The Chair explained that Links to Work had been an issue for the Panel throughout the previous year. There were two parallel significant issues in terms of the impact of restructuring on staff and on service users and that clear errors had been identified in the way these processes had been undertaken. He explained that the Panel continued to remain focussed on understanding the type of service provision which will be put in place and the impact on service users.
- **Personalisation:** The Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Inclusion further explained that personalisation was the wrapping around an individual of public services of which there were four strands: 1. preventative services; 2. the use of technology to provide support for individuals e.g. community alarms; 3. the creation of independence and choice i.e. enabling an individual to determine how they receive services; 4. social capital to enable strengthened support for the vulnerable and disabled;
- Following a Panel query the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Inclusion explained that the People First Programme had been created to act as a steering group to ensure that there was proper coordination of local partners, as well as effective consultation with local residents through a number of public consultation groups, as part of efforts to support the introduction of personalisation in Walsall. In terms of implementation there was sufficient capacity to deliver personalisation although the current customer service experience was too mixed and would need to be improved. The Panel and officers agreed that it would be important for the working group to be re-established as the council and its partners moved to the implementation phase of personalisation;
- It was agreed that Councillor Paul would lead the working group, while the scrutiny officer would write out to Members inviting them to participate in the group if they wished.
- **In House Homecare and Neighbourhood Community Officers (NCOs)/ Community Alarm Service (CAS):** The Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Inclusion explained that these were small, specialised floating services with the objective of providing assistance to residents without the need to refer to a social worker. He explained that the CAS was a critical

part of prevention within the personalisation agenda. It was important that the council had a fit-for-purpose in house homecare service which will support vulnerable people and be more cost effective by limiting the need for costly residential care;

- The Panel and officers agreed that in respect of assessments there had been statistical evidence of a shift in time between assessment and the introduction of the support identified. However, the Executive Director for Social Care and Inclusion acknowledged that the council's performance in keeping people in their own homes and not in care required further improvement. Following a Panel query he explained that there were twenty-six NCOs and this, together with ensuring that social workers were sufficiently engage with communities, formed part of the effort to ensure that services were outward-looking to support the preventative approach;
- It was agreed that Councillor Oliver would lead the working group, while the scrutiny officer would write out to Members inviting them to participate in the group if they wished.
- **Development of a retail model for the provision of equipment and adaptations:** The Head of the Joint Commissioning Unit explained that the delivery of equipment, for example stair rails, to local residents in a timely manner was very important. The existing approach involved an individual being assessed and then the identified equipment would be delivered to their home either by the council or the NHS. It had been determined that instead people should be supported in deciding their equipment needs for themselves and what they could use comfortably. The retail model would then enable individuals to purchase their own items of equipment through the issuing of a voucher which can then be presented at a high street retailer. This process will be further assisted by a number of retailers who now stock wheel chairs, tap turners and extended-handle cutlery which previously would only have been available through the council or NHS;
- Following a Panel query the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Inclusion acknowledged that it was important that individuals received aids and adaptations promptly following assessment. This was particularly crucial as, for example, appropriate aids and adaptation costing around £5,000 might enable an individual to remain at home rather than have to be moved to residential care which might cost £30,000 annually;
- Further inquiries were to be made regarding a recent instance highlighted by a Panel Member where following assessment a local resident was refused a stair lift on safety grounds.
- **Walsall LINK:** The Head of the Joint Commissioning Unit explained that following the election of a new LINK board and the introduction of a new host organisation, the LINK was now in a better position to move forward. He also welcomed the possibility of scrutiny of the work of the Joint Commissioning Unit by the LINK.
- Officers highlighted the links between those issues identified by the survey, particularly funding future care for the elderly and personalisation, and the work programme. The Head of the Joint Commissioning Unit explained that one of key challenges will be to strike a balance between what state funding is provided and the extent to which individuals self-fund care. In responding to a Panel query the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Inclusion agreed that it was important that information regarding services was communicated to service users, as well as potential service users, in the most effective and appropriate manner. He also explained that it was critical that local residents were given the opportunity to provide their views to any local or national consultation in relation to the future shaping

- of services;
- The Chair concluded the discussion by explaining that a critical issue for the Panel was to understand the impact of budget reductions on local services. It would be important that guidance on this issue was brought to the Panel in a format that was distinct from financial reports. Officers identified the Joint Commissioning Unit business plan as one possible vehicle for supporting consideration of this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

**That**

- 1. officers continue to provide regular guidance to the Panel regarding the restructuring of Links to Work on both staff and service users;**
- 2. the personalisation working group is re-established;**
- 3. a working group be established to consider the introduction of In House Home Care and associated response services;**
- 4. the Panel will continue to receive regular guidance regarding the introduction of the retail model to the aids and adaptations programme;**
- 5. the Panel will continue to receive regular guidance regarding the progress and activity of the LINK;**
- 6. the Panel will receive regular guidance, in addition to financial reports, in relation to the impact on local services of budget reductions.**

**06/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair informed Members that the next Panel meeting would held on 15 July 2010.

The meeting terminated at 7:05pm