

SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday, 29 January, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room, Council House, Walsall

Panel Members Present

Councillor M. Longhi (Chair)
Councillor T. Jukes (Vice-Chair)
Councillor C. Clews
Councillor M. Bird
Councillor B. McCracken
Councillor J. Fitzpatrick
Councillor R. Burley
Councillor E. Hazell
Councillor J. Rochelle
Councillor I. Shires
Councillor H. Sarohi

Portfolio holders Present

Councillor D. Coughlan – Social Care
Councillor I. Robertson – Health

Officers Present

Rob Gilham - Chief Executive (WHG)
Elise Hopkins – System Leader
Salma Ali – Accountable Officer (Clinical Commissioning Group)
Keith Skerman – Executive Director (Social Care and Inclusion)
Andy Rust - Head of Joint Commissioning Unit
Carol Williams – Head of Programme Delivery
Terry Hawkins – Assistant Director (Social Care and Inclusion)
Irfan Mohammed – Senior Accountancy Officer
Lloyd Haynes – Senior Finance Manager
Paul Gordon – Head of Business Change
Tina Faulkner – Press Officer
Nikki Gough – Committee Business and Governance Manager

393/15 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors D. Shires and L. Rattigan.

394/15 Substitutions

The following substitutions were received for the duration of the meeting:-

Councillor I. Shires substituted for Councillor D. Shires
Councillor J. Rochelle substituted for Councillor L. Rattigan

395/15 Declarations of interest and party whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

396/15 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the private agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

397/15 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 December, 2014 were approved as a true and accurate record.

398/15 Aids and Adaptations

The Chair invited Councillor R. Worrall to speak on the item.

Councillor R. Worrall tabled a document outlining his concerns about aids and adaptations in Walsall (annexed). Members discussed the issues involved and acknowledged that several pieces of legislation needed to be considered, including the Disability Discrimination Act, Bedroom Tax, and the Right to Buy. Officers emphasised that when considering housing need the authority/social tenant needed to consider everyone and their housing need, and this was a difficult area to present. However, WHG and the Local Authority worked in partnership. Members were informed that ultimately finances had implications on what could be done.

The Chief Executive of WHG explained that there were a large number of tenants on waiting lists, and significant amounts of money could be spent on adapting homes if people refused to move. It cost a significant amount of money to remove adaptations. Officers were faced with the dilemma of spending significant amounts of money adapting homes when other properties existed. This had led to a policy which offered individuals an alternative home that was already adapted, although exceptions always existed. The Executive Director of Social Care stated that the Council was

trying to meet an increasing demand without any additional budget this year, and the policy was a good one which met people's need. If the policy was not operated there was a risk that finances would run low. The policy meets the Disability Discrimination Act. WHG had matched the capital investment and the Council needed to work in partnership. The Chair summed up and suggested there was an alternative way forward.

A member of the public was invited to speak. He addressed the Panel and explained his situation and emphasised that until an individual was disabled they could not understand what it was like to be disabled. Members suggested that social housing built in the future should be built for the whole life, and include downstairs washing facilities. Solutions to the financial implications of adapting properties were discussed, including modular accommodation. It was agreed that an 'Aids and Adaptations' Working Group would be established with the following membership:-

Councillors E. Hazell, H. Sarohi, I. Shires, J. Fitzpatrick and David Sinclair (as an expert witness)

Members expressed concern that a person's disability was being used to move an individual to an alternative home. Members felt that it would be better to incentivise people to move.

Resolved

That an Aids and Adaptations Working Group would be established with the following membership:-

Councillors E. Hazell, H. Sarohi, I. Shires, J. Fitzpatrick and David Sinclair

399/15 Major incident at Walsall Healthcare Trust

The Chief Executive of Walsall Healthcare Trust explained that when the NHS declared a major incident, which was normally defined as one event which put significant pressure on an organisation, this enabled management to call in help. Over Christmas/New Year, Walsall Healthcare Trust was put on an internal 'major incident'. New admissions were not turned away but it allowed the hospital to operate at a heightened level. Neighbouring hospitals were unable to help as they were also under significant pressure. Staff at the hospital were praised for their hard work over this period.

The Chair expressed the view that 'busy' mode should not be the 'norm' and questioned if capacity planning was adequate for surges in the system.

Officers explained that arrangements were underway to meet the rising challenges:-

- Assessment of the causes of pressure
- Managing demand away from the hospital

- Expanding and improving the capacity and utilisation of acute resources
- Timely step down from acute into social care

It was acknowledged that the hospital was still in a period of high risk. Members were informed that every part of the system had seen a rise in demand and extra work was needed to understand why demands rose so much in December. Officers were exploring what else could be done, including spot purchasing additional capacity. Although they were open to more ideas, the actions they got were right. Members discussed a presentation which was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was agreed that this would be provided to the Panel in the future.

The Chief Executive of Walsall Healthcare Trust stated that the Trust would be £12-13 million overspent. Despite this, the Trust would be investing in nursing/staff to enable it to get stable.

Members asked how appropriate A and E presentations were. The Chief Executive stated that a large proportion were going to the Urgent Care Team, which was working well. The problem was people needed admitting.

The rise in numbers of older people with co-morbidities was acknowledged as a factor. As was the rise in emergency admissions of working age adults suffering from working in certain occupations. It was agreed that the issue of capacity planning would be discussed by officers outside of the meeting.

400/15 Draft Revenue and Capital Programme

Officers informed Members that draft budget proposals had been distributed to Scrutiny Panels for consultation as part of the budget setting process. The final budget will be presented to Cabinet on 4 February, 2015 for recommendation to Council on 26 February, 2015.

Resolved

The report was noted.

401/15 Quarter 3 financial position

Members were informed that before the action plan and transfers to or from reserves services under the remit of the Social Care and Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel were overspent by £5.361million. Members were re-assured that action plans were in place and officers were considering different ways of doing things.

402/15 Replacement of the client record management system for children and adult social care

Walsall's new Mosaic system will be one system utilised by Children's and Adult's Social Care practitioners. The system was being developed to support the business to undertake its activity in the most effective way. A discussion around implementation dates was held and Members were informed that the system would be introduced in a phased approach with go live beginning in April, 2015. Functionality for social care and case management for Children's Services as the priority, with modules for Children's and Adults planned to be brought online during the Spring and Summer. The Panel were informed that the system was compatible with other Authorities and this web based system would allow links with other organisations if necessary.

403/15 Work Programme and Forward Plan

It was agreed that Councillor R. Burley would be appointed to the Area Partnership's Working Group established by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

The Work Programme was noted and Forward Plan was noted.

404/15 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 12 March, 2015, at 6.00 p.m.

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 8.25 p.m.

Signed:

Date: