

Adult Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 March 2010

Present:

Ms D Irving (Chairman)

Mr D Callaby	Mr S Little
Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh	Ms J Mickleburgh
Mr T Garrod	Mr J Mooney
Mr P Hardy	Mr J Perry-Warnes
Mr D Harrison	Mrs A Thomas
Mr J Joyce	Mr A J Wright

Substitute Members:

Mr A D Adams for Miss C Casimir
Mr R Smith for Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Also Present:

Mr D Harwood, Non-Voting Cabinet Member
Mr B Long, Non-Voting Deputy Cabinet Member

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Miss C Casimir, Mrs M Chapman-Allen, Mr M Kiddle-Morris and Mr N Shaw.

Officers/Others Present:

Mary Ledgard, Norfolk LINK
Harold Bodmer, Director of Adult Social Services
Janice Dane, Head of Finance, Adult Social Services
Catherine Underwood, Assistant Director, Commissioning and Service Transformation, Adult Social Services
Mike Gleeson, Head of Democratic Support, Adult Social Services
Carol Lock, ICT Development Manager, Adult Social Services
Colin Sewell, Head of Policy Performance and Quality, Adult Social Services
Jeremy Bone, Planning and Policy Officer, Adult Social Services
Terry Cotton, Quality Assurance Officer, Domiciliary Care, Adult Social Services

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 January 2010 were confirmed by the Panel and signed by the Chairman.

2 Chairman's Announcement--Strategic Model of Care

The Chairman reported on a decision made by the Cabinet the previous day about the Strategic Model of Care. She said that the Cabinet had agreed, in principle, to begin negotiations to set up a new care company within the NORSE Group which was wholly owned by the County Council. The next step was for a detailed business plan to be produced and presented firstly to the Panel for comments and then to the Cabinet for a final decision in summer 2010. In reply to questions, the Chairman said that it was unknown at this stage exactly when the business plan would be presented to the Panel.

The Director said that in taking a report on the Strategic Model of Care to yesterday's Cabinet, there had been no intention on the part of officers to avoid Members' scrutiny. He said that the matter could be discussed further at the next Party Spokespersons meeting before a report was taken to the Panel for comments and to the Cabinet for a final decision. The Director added that a new company, within the NORSE Group, would be able to take advantage of commercial capital funding opportunities to deliver the Department's strategy to develop more housing with care places and to change the nature of its residential care homes.

3 Declarations of Interest

Mrs A Thomas declared a personal interest because she was the South Norfolk Council representative on Saffron Housing Trust.

Ms D Irving declared a personal interest as a volunteer for the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Mr A Wright declared a personal interest as a Member of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Mental Health Forum.

Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh declared a personal interest because he had a substantive contract with the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust and he was also a Mental Health Practitioner.

Mr J Perry-Warnes declared a personal interest as a Member of the Friends of Kelling Hospital.

Mr S Little declared a personal interest as a Norwich City Council Member of the Norwich Access Group for the Disabled.

4 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no local Member issues/Member questions.

7 Cabinet Member Feedback

(a) Renewing Supporting People's Service Contracts

(b) The procurement method for Support and Enablement Services for Adults with Learning Difficulties.

(c) Norfolk County Council's response to the consultation on Personal Care at Home.

The annexed report by the Cabinet Member was received and noted.

The Panel discussed the Government green paper about Personal Care at Home and how this proposed policy could place considerable budgetary pressures on the County Council. The Cabinet Member said that the funding shortfall in Norfolk was likely to be in the region of £5m in the first six months of the new policy being introduced. He added that he had met with Andy Burnham MP to discuss how to prevent this creating an unsustainable financial position for the County Council. The Director said that he was aware of considerable financial uncertainty across all local authorities concerning demand that could not be met. He added that Norfolk had used a similar methodology to that of other local authorities to estimate the number of people who would meet the new criteria for free personal care. The Director said the proposals in the green paper were about delivering more of the Council's existing resources to those already receiving support independently, whereas the Council's priority was to provide more services to the rapidly growing number of people whose needs were at risk of not being met.

ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

8 Modern Social Care – Phase 3 – Mobile and Flexible Working Pilot – Lessons Learnt Report

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that informed Members of the lessons learnt from the Mobile and Flexible Working Pilot carried out from April to October 2009 as part of the Modern Social Care Programme and the decision at the Senior Management Team in November 2009 to roll out the pilot on a controlled basis.

In reply to questions, Officers said the pilot was about testing out the technologies that were available for remote access/mobile working within the Department. The pilot had found that while these technologies were proven, access in some outside locations to a suitable data point was proving to be problematic. For example, the pilot had found that social workers wanted access to dedicated computer terminals in areas of

libraries and other public bodies that could not be visited by the public.

In reply to further questions, Officers said that there had been two social workers in the field of mental health that had taken part in the pilot. Officers said that it had been difficult to assess the impact of mobile and flexible working on those staff with a disability because of the small size of the pilot. Mr Garrod said that he would be willing to be involved with the working of the Disability Group that was being set up with Department staff to test/pilot ways to tackle social inclusion for staff with a disability, and this was welcomed by the Panel.

Officers estimated that the Department had so far reached the “half-way” stage in introducing new technology for mobile and flexible working. It was pointed out that a significant number of frontline staff had been issued with laptops and mobile phones but changes in staff behaviour were needed in order to move the use of technology forward.

The Panel endorsed the approach agreed by the Senior Management Team in October 2009 to progress mobile and flexible working. This involved going ahead with Option 3 (mentioned in the report), namely, continuing with the pilot in the Northern Locality and rolling it out to staff moving into Priory House, King’s Lynn (a new facility) as a priority, and to a small sample of staff from other localities.

9 Forward Work Programme – Scrutiny

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that summarised the scrutiny work programme and gave an update on progress.

Members spoke about the considerable length of time that it could sometimes take District Councils to provide home support services. It was noted that a new Working Group was being set up to monitor the quality of the Home Support Service and that this group would be able to look at best practice in contracting for home support from other authorities using the assistance of the Regional Centre for Excellence in Procurement and other organisations as appropriate. The Cabinet Member suggested that in reviewing current monitoring arrangements for the home support service, the Working Group might find it helpful to examine the monitoring tools used by King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and take its officers advice on developments in the service.

It was noted that arrangements were being made for a Working Group on the Learning Difficulties Service to look at best practice in regard to Valuing People Now delivery expectations and how these could best be met in Norfolk.

The Panel noted that the terms of reference for the Working Groups about the Learning Difficulties Service and the Home Support Service, together with those for the Community Meals Consultative Council, were available for Members to take from the back of the Committee Room.

The Panel came up with the following names of Members who could serve on the Community Meals Consultative Council:

Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh
Diana Irving
James Joyce
Stephen Little
Tony Wright.

The Cabinet Member asked to be sent the agenda papers for meetings of the Consultative Council and said that he would appreciate an invitation to speak at one of its meetings. Those Members who had been appointed to the Community Meals Consultative Council asked that its first meeting be changed from the suggested date of 18 March 2010 to a date yet to be agreed with Members.

The Panel noted the current status of the scrutiny items and of the Community Meals Consultative Council.

OVERVIEW ITEMS

10 Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report for 2009/10

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that provided current performance and finance monitoring information for 2009/2010. The latest forecast was that the Department would achieve further savings of -£1.864m by the end of the financial year, giving a forecast overspend of +£3.798m.

The Panel noted the following key points:

- Changes in homecare were continuing to result in savings.
- There were also savings in service user contributions and support from the Social Care Reform grant that would enable the financial position to improve.
- The forecasts had changed regularly from one meeting to the next. This was because the Department had a volatile, demand-led budget, which made for significant fluctuations in the forecast revenue outturn position during the financial year. In order to avoid confusion, the word “approved” budget would not be used in future budget tables.
- No decisions have yet been made corporately regarding any Adult Social Services overspend. The inherent financial pressures on Purchase of Care and on the Learning Difficulties Service were expected to continue in 2010-11 and in future years.
- Mr Little asked to be sent further details outside of the meeting of the reduction in the Learning Difficulties staff costs that looked unlikely to be achieved in addition to the Priority Base Budget saving.
- With regard to Performance Indicator N131 (People Delayed after being able to be Discharged from Hospital), Norfolk was continuing to make good progress and

improve its position; although there was still some way to go.

- The Director said that as Chairman of the Regional Forum of Directors of Adult Social Services he had been tasked with looking at how to apply a consistent approach across local authorities to the demands caused by the region's ageing population; with life expectancy rising and the absolute number of older people with poor health expected to rise, changes in the population were putting ever increasing cost pressures on social services.

The Panel noted the current performance and finance monitoring information for 2009/2010.

11 Adult Social Services Service Plan 2010-13

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that set out the main proposals within the Adult Social Services' Service Plan 2010-13.

The Service Plan was due to be published by 1 April 2010. The priority service plan objectives were identified as safeguarding, prevention, self-directed support, joined-up services and meeting demands for services within budget. Steps were being taken to develop and improve access to a range of preventative services that involved working with partners. Officers said that the use of good preventative schemes would help to reduce emergency admissions to hospital.

In reply to questions, it was noted that the Service Plan referred to corporate best practice regarding sickness absence. Persistent short-term sickness absence was being kept under constant review and there was also a corporate policy with regard to dealing with issues in the workplace around "challenging behaviour" that were being addressed as part of the Service Plan.

It was pointed out that the Service Plan was also about supporting people with learning difficulties to find suitable employment.

Members noted the progress shown in the report.

ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY (Continued)

12 Exclusion of the Public

The Panel was presented with the following reasons for exclusion:

The next report on the agenda contained information relating to the financial business affairs of a particular organisation. It contained legal advice which was needed to inform fully the County Council in its decision making. This information could be subject to challenge and needed to be treated as protected by legal professional privilege. The public interest in maintaining this exemption on the above grounds outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information for the following reasons:

The report provided advice as to the options open to the Council.

These were short-term future options which would have long-term effects.

Disclosure might compromise the improvements that were being implemented.

Resolved –

That the public be excluded from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

13 Further Update Report – CareForce and the Provision of Homecare Services in Norwich

The Panel received a report (containing exempt information) that provided a further update on the performance of CareForce and its provision of homecare to service users in the Norwich locality that showed how the current situation had been reached.

The Panel noted that the outcome of the recent Inspection by the CQC and the Quality Assessment undertaken by Adult Social Services in respect of the CareForce Norwich Branch and endorsed the contractual requirements set out in Section 2.11 of the report and contractual decisions for the County Council in Sections 2.11 to 2.14, should CareForce not ensure substantial improvements in the provision of homecare to service users in Norwich. The Director was also asked by Members to take a similar approach regarding the contract with CareForce for the homecare service in the South Norfolk area.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm

Chairman



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