

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2010 at Shire Hall, Warwick

Present:

Members of the Committee Councillor Les Caborn (in the Chair following election)
“ Jeff Clarke
“ Richard Chattaway
“ Jose Compton
“ Mike Gittus
“ Julie Jackson
“ Barry Longden
“ Tilly May
“ Kate Rolfe
“ Claire Watson
“ Sonja Wilson

Other County Councillors Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care)
Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Customers, Workforce and Governance)
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Group Leader (Liberal Democrat))

Officers John Bolton, Interim Strategic Director for Adult and Community Services
Nick Gower-Johnson, County Localities and Communities Manager
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator
Kim Harlock, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Performance Management
Chris Lewington, Carer and Customer Engagement Services Manager
Rachel Norwood, Lead Commissioner – Supporting People
Jane Pollard, Head of Democratic Services
Ron Williamson, Head of Communities and Wellbeing/Resources

Also present: Roger Copping (Warwickshire Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)).

1. General

(1) Election of Chair

Councillor Jose Compton, seconded by Councillor Claire Watson, proposed that Councillor Les Caborn be appointed Chair of the Committee.

Resolved that Councillor Les Caborn be appointed Chair of the Committee.

(2) Election of Vice Chair

Councillor Tilly May, seconded by Councillor Mike Gittus, proposed that Councillor Claire Watson be appointed Vice Chair of the Committee.

Resolved that Councillor Claire Watson be appointed Vice Chair of the Committee.

(3) Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Dodd

(4) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Kate Rolfe declared a personal interest as a private carer not employed by Warwickshire County Council.

(5) Remit of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Noted.

(6) Minutes of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 2 March 2010

The minutes of the meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 March 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising

(a) Minute 4 Quarter 3 Corporate Performance report m 2009/10

A Member highlighted that briefing notes requested at the previous meeting had not been provided. It was agreed that the relevant officers be asked to circulate briefing notes on the following issues:

- (i) Information relating to previous and current assessment times and measures put in place to improve them;
- (ii) A list of reliable trades' people in Warwickshire.

It was noted that a joint scrutiny exercise would be carried by Health and Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Delayed Discharges.

(b) Minute 8 Provisional Items for future meetings - Progress of recommendation of Falls Prevention Panel

In response a request for a progress report on implementation of the Falls Prevention Panel's recommendations it was agreed that an update would be included in the work programme for the Committee's September meeting. Councillor Jose Compton asked that she be provided with a copy of the progress report if it was found that she was no longer a member of the committee (following the proposed review of the Overview and Scrutiny function by June Council).

(7) Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Board

None

(The order of these minutes is as they appear on the agenda and do not reflect the order in which they were considered.)

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. Questions to the Portfolio Holder/Portfolio Holders Update

In response to questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

Councillor Izzi Seccombe

In response to a request from Councillor Richard Chattaway for an update on the PHILLIS Service, Councillor Seccombe asked that he be provided with a copy of the briefing note recently circulated to Committee Members.

Councillor Colin Hayfield

Transformation of the Library Service – Councillor Hayfield reported that the Council was still facing a deficit in delivering its library service and a proposal was currently under consideration to combine the Library, One Stop Shop and other services.

The Committee noted that a report on “A Blue Print for Library Services” was scheduled for the Committees’ September meeting.

4. Strategic Review of Supporting People Services for Older People

Councillor Izzi Seccombe presented the report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services which provided the Committee with a summary of the Strategic Review of Supporting People (SP) services for older people report and the recommendations from the review. Members’ were asked to comment on the review and recommendations as part of a 3-month wider consultation.

Councillor Seccombe referred to paragraph 2.5 of the report which reflected that some older people who lived in sheltered housing did not need support and that there people who lived in the community in their own homes who had needs that might get their support needs met without having to move house.

During discussion the following comments were noted:

- (1) That the Government had announced that funding for housing related support would be no longer ring fenced;
- (2) That the Government’s announcement relating to the Supporting People Administration (Area Based Grants), which was not ring fenced, would equate to a 2.5% reduction;
- (3) That the Strategic Director of Finance would be looking at a range of measures to address the impact of the Government’s announcements across the authority as a whole;
- (4) That the Review had been approved by the Supporting People Partnership, which was made up of representatives from the five district and borough councils and the County Council;
- (5) That the aim was to access people who were currently not receiving services and to consider whether sheltered housing wardens had capacity to benefit the wider community;

In response to concern expressed that accessing services on-line created barriers for many older people Rachael Norwood undertook to raise this issue with the providers.

The Committee –

- (1) Welcomed the Strategic Review and the recommendation outlined in the report;
- (2) Continued its support for the Supporting People's Programme;
- (3) Asked Rachel Norwood to raise with the providers the concern expressed about barriers created for older people in accessing services on line.

5. Fairer Charges and Contributions.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services which outlined the need to make changes to the policies under Fairer Charging in relation to the introduction of personal budgets. It also addressed issues relating to the levels of charges/contributions for the future in order to achieve requirements within the Council's savings plans.

Copies of the letter, information pack and questionnaire, proposed to be sent out to service users, once the report had been agreed by Cabinet, were circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe explained that all authorities were reviewing their charging criteria and that the proposed increases would not affect those people who were on income support. The impact would be felt by those people who had the ability to pay. She acknowledged that the timetable for consultation and implementation was tight but said she had asked for the report to be deferred to enable this Committee to express its views to Cabinet the following day, 17 June 2010.

The Chair added that, although the timetable was tight, he had asked for this Committee, or the relevant Committee, to see the results of the consultation before being considered by Cabinet.

During discussion the following concerns were expressed:

- (1) That the letter, information pack and questionnaire had pre-determined Cabinet's decision;
- (2) That the wording of the heading of covering letter should be revised, the consultation and questions were narrow, the consultation was being undertaken over the summer holiday period, the timescale for implementing the charges was too short, there was need for clarification of the transport costs (whether the price quoted was for a single or return journey) and the inclusion of a 'help line' telephone contact number and "ready reckoner guide" would assist in helping people understand and assess their situation.
- (3) That the 50% rule for payment of services was unfair and should cease;

- (4) That the cost of accessing insurance based products, recommendation e) of the report to Cabinet, would not be an option for most people;

In reply to the above comments the officers said that:

- (1) The information packs had been prepared in advance of the Cabinet decision so that they could be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting and before the decision was reported in the press or users hearing of the proposals by other sources. All service users would be sent the consultation pack;
- (2) A 'help line' number was included in the covering letter but this could be made more visible. To help users understand the assessment process, Table 4 of the report "Examples of Income Support" could also be included;
- (3) The 50% rule was an important issue that needed to be raised during the consultation.

Councillor Secombe added that the proposal to investigate insurance based products was building for the future and, whilst this might not be available at the moment, it was aimed at giving people the opportunity to plan for their old age.

Resolved that the Committee–

- (1) recommends Cabinet to amend its recommendations to ensure that no unreasonable hardship is caused and that implementation of the charges is phased;
- (2) Agree to hold a special meeting of Overview and Scrutiny on either 12th or 13th October to review the report on the outcome of consultation prior to decision at Cabinet on 14 October.

6. Valuing People Now: Partnership Board Annual Self Assessment 2009-2010.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board had been tasked with providing an annual self assessment for the regional programme lead. Attached to the report was the template each local authority was required to complete with the full engagement of service users, carers and stakeholder organisations

Kim Harlock reported that feedback from the Regional Office had been received and areas identified where there were shortfalls in performance. In this connection a meeting of the Partnership Board had been arranged for the 23 June 2010 to put in place a robust action plan to address the areas of concern.

The Chair said that the Regional Office's response to the assessment and action plan would be brought back to the September meeting of the Committee for consideration.

In reply to questions Kim Harlock –

- (1) Said that the Learning Disability Board, Carers, Lead officers and a range of stakeholders had signed off the Self-Assessment;
- (2) Undertook to circulate to Members a copy of the Regional Office's response;

The Committee:

- (1) noted the first annual self assessment, which was a record of the progress being made within learning disability services;
- (2) asked that the action plan be brought to the Committee's September meeting.

7. Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) – Progress Report.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance describing recent progress made by Warwickshire LINK and giving an update to Members regarding the work programme being pursued by LINK in 2010/11.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse and Nick Gower-Johnson (County Localities and Communities Manager) outlined the background and recent history to LINKs in Warwickshire.

During the ensuing discussion concern was expressed about the lack of information and understanding about the role of LINK and the lack of progress of the work programme. In response to these concerns the following comments were noted:

- (1) That paragraph 1.6 outlined the legislative powers given to LINKs to carry out its role. These powers included the right to visit NHS and social care services and refer issues of concern to Overview and Scrutiny Committees for further action;
- (2) That Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) had been commissioned to oversee project management and development;
- (3) That LINKs, after a slow start, now had a clear focus and the capacity to complete its 2010/11 work programme.

The Committee:

- a) Noted the present position in relation to the Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LINK)
- b) Expressed disappointment that it had taken so long to agree the work programme and asks for a report in 6 months times with an update on progress of the work programme.

8. Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items Relevant to the Work of this Committee

The Committee –

- (1) noted the table setting out provisional items for future meetings;
- (2) agreed that an additional meeting be held on Wednesday 14 July 2010 at 10:00 a.m. to consider items relevant to the remit of this Committee that are being considered by Cabinet on 22 July 2010.

9. Any Other Items

None.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 12.30 p.m.