

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 October 2005 at Shire Hall, Warwick

Present:

Members of the Committee	Councillor Les Caborn
	Jose Compton
	“ Jill Dill-Russell
	“ Richard Dodd
	“ Marion Haywood
	“ Nina Knapman
	“ Mota Singh (Vice Chair)
	“ Ian Smith
	“ Mick Stanley
	“ Ray Sweet
	“ Sid Tooth (Chair)

Officers	Bill Basra, Corporate Review Officer
	Kushal Birla, Head of Library & Information Service
	Martin Jones, Head of Resources Management
	Ann Mawdsley, Senior Committee Administrator
	Nicole North, Assistant to the Conservative Group
	Jane Pollard, Assistant County Solicitor
	Jon Whiting, Service Manager

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colin Hayfield, Councillor Anita Macaulay and Noel Hunter.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Ray Sweet declared a personal interest in Item 4 as his brother-in-law received care from Social Services.

Councillor Sid Tooth declared a personal interest in Item 4 as his daughter received care from Social Services.

(3) Minutes of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on the 6 September 2005

The minutes of the meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 September 2005 were agreed as a correct record with the following changes:

Page 1 – 1.(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The words “and in Item 4 as an Associate Manager of the South Warwickshire PCT” added to the end of the first paragraph.

Matters arising

Page 5 – 5. Scrutiny Review Occupational Therapy Update

Ann Mawdsley agreed to check that Councillor Anita Macaulay had received the details she requested on the joint appointments of occupational therapists.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

3. Progress Report on One Stop Shop Project

Members considered the report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards updating the Committee on the Joint One Stop Shop project between Warwickshire Library & Information Service and Warwick District Council.

Kushal Birla highlighted the following points:

- a. In 2004 the Cabinet agreed to a pilot for One Stop Shops in Kenilworth, Lillington and Whitnash.
- b. The opening of the Kenilworth pilot was scheduled for Friday, 21 October 2005.
- c. Services provided by the One Stop Shops would include District/Borough Council and County Council functions. The monitoring of services would be recorded on the Customer Relation Management System already shared by the District/Boroughs and the County Council.
- d. Following wide consultation with public and stakeholders, the One Stop Shops would all be called “Warwickshire Direct” followed by the town name, for example “Warwickshire Direct – Kenilworth”.
- e. A number of evaluation criteria had been set and the Committee would receive monitoring reports on these criteria.

During the ensuing the discussion the following issues were noted:

1. Members welcomed the report and looked forward to seeing the first tangible results resulting from a lot of hard work and preparation.
2. The 50% contributions from the District/Borough Councils had been crucial to the project and enabled the improvement of library buildings as well as efficiency savings with teams comprising both Library and District/Borough staff.
3. In an effort to ensure there were no delays on enquiries, all enquiries would be entered onto a web feedback form that would be directed to the correct service and trigger a response.
4. A workshop would be held with colleagues from other Departments to look at the next phase of this project. This would include costing as to date the One Stop Shop pilots had received no revenue input and Library staff had been taken away from Libraries to work on the Pilot.
5. The library network included mobile libraries as well as physical buildings and would need to be linked in to the Customer Call Centre. Members agreed that the mobile libraries were an essential service connecting with people who were often isolated from services.
6. Discussions with partners were ongoing to promote heritage within the library network.
7. Training of staff was ongoing and the quality of service provision would identify the quality of that training. Consultations would be carried out with the public and targets would be monitored to ensure that the One Stop Shops added value and improved the number the visitors and service provision.

Members agreed to support the report and endorse the plans to explore further opportunities for one stop shops.

4. Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) Eligibility Threshold

Members considered the report of the Director of Social Care and Health asking the question whether the eligibility threshold for Adult Social Services, as set out in the FACS Framework, should be lowered including a number of options and their cost implications.

Jon Whiting highlighted the following issues:

- a. The report was prompted by the need to review the eligibility threshold annually as part of the budget setting agenda.
- b. Government were promoting a prevention agenda encouraging Social Services Departments to focus more attention on lower level prevention services.

- c. The performance assessment framework highlighted the support of people living independently as an area for improvement.
- d. d. Various options were outlined in the report which would enable more preventative services to be delivered. One option was to lower the threshold to include all or part of the Moderate band, and some costing of the options was included.

Martin Jones added the following:

- i. It was important that Members understood that the lowering of the eligibility threshold could not be supported within the Council's existing level of investment in adult social care services .
- ii. Members also needed to be aware of the financial implications arising for the Council in responding to the Children Act and the separation of budgets for Adult and Children Services from next year. Currently, the Council's spend on adult social care was significantly below its Formula Spending Share.
- iii. There were currently only three shires judged by the Commission for Social Service Inspection to be serving all adults well and all three operated their FACS threshold to support moderate needs. This implied that there was a correlation between investment in Adult Services, FACS thresholds and national assessment.
- iv. A recent survey of Social Services expenditure showed that 75% of Authorities experienced cost pressures around Children's Services, so this was a national problem that impinged on the extent to which additional investment in adult social care was available.
- v. To date only Schools Formula Funding was ring-fenced and the Authority would have to consider the issue of ring-fencing funding between Adult and Children social care in the future.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

- 1. The current threshold of substantial needs responded to users considered to be at substantial risk, requiring care services to survive. If the threshold was lowered to moderate needs, this would include needs which presented a less immediate risk to independence and would improve the quality of life, social inclusion and the user's ability to participate within a community.
- 2. It was not possible to change the eligibility framework in any way but there was some flexibility within the scope of the criteria for staff to take account of risk to a person's independence not only immediately but also in the foreseeable future. If the decision was to sub-divide the moderate band into a higher and lower level, these levels of moderate needs would need to be clearly defined.
- 3. It was agreed that a move towards lowering the threshold to care for more people with a greater range of needs would increase the prevention benefits, which would prevent crisis situations and high expenses later on.

4. The preliminary assessment was that a lowering of the threshold to a moderate band would cost approximately £8.5 million a year.
5. There was an aspiration on the part of the Committee to move to a situation where the Council was serving all people well increasing well-being, general health and improved integration into communities by embracing a shift from substantial to moderate needs as a proactive rather than a reactive service.

Having considered the report, the Committee agreed to:

- i. Note the potential financial implications of a change to the eligibility threshold.
- ii. Recommend to the Cabinet to change the eligibility threshold to include all Moderate band needs subject to appropriate funding being made available in the budget for future years.
- iii. Note that the financial implications of these changes will be incorporated as a revenue budget issue to be considered by this Committee at its next meeting in November.
- iv. Receive a further report at the 22 November meeting giving more detail on services in Derbyshire, Cornwall and Somerset, and detailed information on the levels of moderate needs and financial implications to the Council.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

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

Members agreed the provisional items for future meetings and Forward Plan Items.

6. Any other Items

There were no other items.

Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 3.30 p.m.