

The **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE** met at **WARWICK** on the **19 November 2007**.

Present: -

Independent Members

John Bridgeman (Chair),
Mark Magowan.

County Councillors

Sarah Boad,
Les Caborn,
Mick Jones,
Tim Naylor,
John Vereker

Also present:

Councillor Peter Fowler (Cabinet Member for
Performance and Development).

Officers

Performance and Development Directorate

Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance,
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator,
Garry Rollason, Audit and Risk Manager,

Adult Health and Community Services

Liz Bruce, Head of Local Commissioning

Tribute to the Warwickshire Fire-fighters

The Committee stood in silent tribute to the memory of the four fire fighters who had died in the recent incident at Atherstone-on-Stour.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

None.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Mick Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 – Internal Audit Report as the County Council's representative on the Education Business Partnership.

(3) Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 25 September 2007.

It was Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Committee's 25 September 2007 meeting be approved subject to an apology for absence being recorded in respect of Councillor Sarah Boad.

(4) Matters Arising.

Councillor Sarah Boad raised her concerns about the date of the previous meeting being changed without consultation with Committee Members and as a consequence she had not been able to attend the meeting. Councillor John Vereker expressed supporting views. The Chair apologised and said that this issue had been discussed and dealt with at the previous meeting and the concerns noted.

2. Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committee 15-16 October 2007

(a) Report by Councillor Mick Jones

Councillor Jones reported on his attendance at the Conference. He referred to the Conference newsletters and highlighted –

- that much of the Assembly discussion time had been spent on case studies.
- the importance of the Local Filter that was scheduled to be brought in by April 2008 but which he considered would not impact greatly on the County Council because it did not have any cases. There were many cases elsewhere, however, mostly involving parish councils, which produced a heavy workload. The debate also focused around how the new process would be managed and financed and the requirement that an independent member must chair Standards committees.

Discussion followed during which Members commented on the benefit of further training being provided and that it would be useful to include 'fictional' cases. Greta Needham undertook to arrange further Member training in the New Year and said that there was a wealth of case law that Members could discuss as part of the training session.

The Chair thanked Councillor Jones for his report.

(2) Standards Board for England - Annual Assembly Newsletter 2007/08

Resolved, having considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development, that the Sixth Annual Assembly Newsletter, the Daily Detail and previous issues of the Daily Detail, which were distributed during the Assembly, be noted.

3. Adult Social Care Case Recording

Liz Bruce presented the report of the Strategic Director for Adult, Health and Community Services, which updated the Committee on the progress that had been made since the formal audit in many of the self-auditing of case files. She outlined that all the recommendations of the last Audit had been addressed and implemented.

In reply to questions Liz Bruce said that -

- (i) there were approximately 2000 open case files in Warwickshire (350 being people with learning disabilities, 1500 older people with physical disabilities and 100 people with mental health). Additionally there were some closed cases that needed to be monitored.
- (ii) the Social Care Performance Improvement Board was an internal Performance Board, established to generate priorities and drive performance and did not, as yet, include the Health Authority.
- (iii) with regard to paragraph 2.7 of A3 of 4 of the report, the separation and measurement of quantitative and qualitative element of case file categories had been completed

Liz Bruce also undertook to circulate a briefing note on the following issues -

- The reasons why clients refused care.
- What targets were set for File Audit Outcomes (Table 1 of the report)
- The reasons why files might be missing (Appendix C).
- What work could be done faster if there were additional resources?
- What was the action plan timescales and where was the continuous action plan?
- What were the proposal relating to the future and electronic case file management? Members noted that a pilot scheme was being operated in Rugby using mobile tablets.

Members commended the report which they considered was clear and comprehensive and acknowledged that considerable improvements had been put in place since the concerns had been identified in 2004.

Resolved that the Committee-

- (1) notes the progress that has been made in establishing an improved methodology for evidencing quantitative and qualitative data in case file audits;
- (2) agrees to receive a progress report in 6 months time and then annually.

4. Any Other Business

None

5. Report Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the item mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 and 7 of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. Internal Audit Report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development that summarised internal audit work carried out for the period 1April 2007 to 30 September 2007.

7. Dates of future meetings

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee had been arranged at 10:00 a.m. in Shire Hall as follows:-

Monday 20 February 2008.
Monday 16 June 2008

8. Standards Training for Members

Members referred to their discussion at the beginning of the meeting, item 2 (a) above, about further training being provided in the New Year and proposed that this should include speakers from the recent Assembly and "role play" and that invitations should be extended countywide and to include parish council representatives.

Greta Needham undertook to make arrangements for this training to take place early next year (March).

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 12.00 noon.