

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
held on 21 June 2016**

**Present:**

**Members of the Committee**

Councillors Corinne Davies, Bob Hicks, Julie Jackson, Jeff Morgan, Dave Shilton, Peter Fowler, Howard Roberts, Clive Rickhards, Heather Timms and Alan Webb (Chair).

**Other County Councillors**

Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader

Councillor Richard Chattaway

Councillor Jose Compton, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

Councillor Philip Johnson

Councillor Bill Oler

**District / Borough Councillors**

Councillor Neil Phillips (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council).

**Officers**

John Dixon, Strategic Director for People

Dr John Linnane, Director of Public Health

Paul Spencer, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Beate Wagner, Head of Children & Families

Peter Hatcher, Service Manager, Children and Families

**1. General**

**(1) Apologies for absence**

Councillors John Holland (replaced by Councillor Julie Jackson), Mike Perry (Vice Chair) (replaced by Councillor Dave Shilton), Wallace Redford (replaced by Councillor Peter Fowler) and Kate Rolfe (replaced by Councillor Clive Rickhards). Councillors Margaret Bell (North Warwickshire Borough Council), Belinda Garcia (Rugby Borough Council), Justin Kerridge (Stratford District Council) and Pamela Redford (Warwick District Council).

**(2) Member Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Bob Hicks declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Nuneaton and District Mencap Society

**2. Call-in: Consultation on the Proposal to close Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST)**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained its purpose, to consider the call-in of a decision by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care. A copy of the decision record and the report considered by the Portfolio Holder in reaching her decision had been circulated. The Chair reminded members of the

options available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in determining this matter.

Councillors Bill Oler and Philip Johnson, two of the signatories to the Call-in notice were invited to explain the reasons for the call-in of this decision. Councillor Oler spoke in support of WEST and the services it delivered to residents with learning disabilities. Whilst being mindful of the budgetary savings requirement for the County Council, this group of vulnerable people would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the current service. Councillor Philip Johnson supported this view. He explained the impact of withdrawing the current services and questioned reliance on the alternate arrangements reported, which he felt would be less coordinated than WEST. He also acknowledged the savings requirement, but felt this could be achieved through savings in other areas where there would be less of an impact. He questioned the timing of this decision and the report indicated that the service would be closed, which was why the decision had been called-in at this stage.

Councillor Jose Compton addressed the Committee, reminding members of the budget savings requirement, the many conflicting service demands and the fact that WEST was not a statutory service. Details of the alternate support services were included within the report. This decision was to undertake an eight-week consultation process. Officers were happy to meet with elected members to provide further information and if the consultation process identified further ways to support service users, these would be considered.

The views of the Committee were sought, with the following questions, comments and responses being provided:

- Details were sought of the number of people affected by withdrawal of the WEST service and where they were located within the County.
- A member read extracts of correspondence received from service users, their families and carers.
- It was considered that some of the alternate support mechanisms referred to in the report might also be at risk. Similarly, it was questioned how flexible the alternate support mechanisms would be. Confirming that these service providers were willing to assume responsibility and demonstrating this in the consultation were important points. There was a lack of detail on the alternate arrangements.
- Whilst WEST was not a statutory service, this did not mean the service was not important.
- In terms of the saving requirement, this and the One Organisational Plan would need to be revisited.
- Other members advocated commencing the consultation process. More detail would need to be provided about the alternate support mechanisms and this should be provided as part of the consultation. There was also a need for ongoing monitoring of the alternate support services, should these be introduced.
- It was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could be part of the consultation process and that the call-in of the Portfolio Holder's decision had been premature.
- The purpose of the consultation was debated. Some members felt it was not an open consultation and that the decision had already been taken to close WEST. There were no other options within the consultation, such as to reconfigure the service. Others felt that no decision had yet been taken to close WEST and the consultation should be allowed to proceed.

- The impact for carers was questioned. There might be additional support needs for carers and associated costs, which would need to be weighed.

Peter Hatcher, Service Manager, Children and Families summarised the key points raised by members and responded to them. He confirmed that there were 150 service users affected and explained where they were located within Warwickshire. As part of the consultation, the alternate support services would be a key question area, to ascertain how the closure of WEST would impact on them and the support they would need. He confirmed that a cost analysis had not yet been completed.

Councillor Compton also acknowledged the points raised. These had been noted by officers and more detailed information could be provided to the Committee after the consultation process, but there was a need to commence the consultation.

Councillor Peter Butlin reminded members of the savings requirement. He responded to some of the points made by earlier speakers and commented on the call-in of the decision at this stage. Other members responded, referring to earlier consultation processes and the subsequent decisions reached, also reminding members of the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine executive decisions.

A motion was submitted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee refer this matter for consideration by the Council, as it was not considered that the two other options available, i.e. to take no further action or to refer the decision back to the Portfolio Holder, were appropriate in this case. The proposal was duly seconded.

Members discussed the costs and other implications of delaying this decision, due to its referral to Council. The motion was put to a vote and carried.

### **Resolved**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee refers this matter for consideration by the Council, as it is not considered that the two other options available, i.e. to take no further action or to refer the decision back to the Portfolio Holder are appropriate in this case.

The Committee rose at 4.15p.m.

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Chair