

Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 9th March, 2010.

Present: Cllr Mick Stoker (Chairman); Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Roy Rix

Officers: Mrs L Hanley, P Smith, S Willson (CESC); D Bond, Mrs T Harrison, Miss A Morris, Mrs J Trainer (LD)

Also in attendance: No other persons were present

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Tina Large and Cllr Mick Womphrey

1 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher declared a personal prejudicial interest due to being a member of the Friends of Grange Park.

2 Draft Minutes - 19th January 2010

Members considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2010.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2010 be agreed as a correct record "subject to the inclusion of a comment under item 3 that officers investigate other petition schemes".

3 Legal Services Overview

Members were provided with a report in relation to the Legal Services overview.

Attention was drawn to the considerable work undertaken on the Building Schools for the Future project, the setting up of Xentrall and the Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of Thornaby Town Centre. A number of high profile court cases had also been dealt with by the service.

Members asked whether the service provided advice to strategic partnerships and were advised that advice was provided where Members served on those partnerships.

Discussion took place regarding the timescales for handling legal matters. The Committee were advised that the Legal Department were required to abide by the same corporate standards as other departments in terms of responding to letters, emails etc. However, the time taken to deal with specific issues would depend on the type and complexity of each individual case.

Members queried what would happen if two different Authorities had been provided with different legal advice. Members were advised that in this event, the service would discuss the matter with the relevant legal representatives from the other Authority. In addition, the Director of Law and Democracy regularly met with other lawyers on the Tees Valley Lawyers Group, where such issues could be discussed.

Members asked what would happen if all Members of a Parish Council were prevented from voting on an issue due to prejudicial interests in connection with a particular matter. Members were advised that prior dispensations could be potentially offered if in this situation.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

4 Adult Services Overview

Members received a presentation on the work of Adult Services, summarising achievements, challenges and emerging issues.

Members were advised that the following had been achieved/implemented:

- Resource Allocation System (RAS)
- Personal Needs Questionnaire (PNQ)
- Self Direct Support (SDS) system – live across all teams
- Marketing materials (client / practitioner packs)
- Website info (being developed)
- Practitioner training & support
- Specialist Transformation Team (appointments)
- Link to new Adult Case Management System

Members were advised that challenging issues included:

- market development (supporting providers to change approach)
- Engaging with service users
- confidence in Resource Allocation System due to the outcomes being different from traditional approaches
- supporting carers
- improving performance and making targets achievable
- encouraging 'financial contributions' from clients
- linking regional work

Officers advised that the emerging issues were:

- Planning for support planning
- The development of web-based Adults Directory
- Tenders
- Development of emerging user led organisations
- Meeting targets
- Framework Agreements - new contracts
- De-commissioning of existing services such as day care
- The Pilot for Personal Health Budgets
- Right to control (joining funding from different sources)

Members were updated on the current status of the day care services, Council provided care homes, Council provided home care, learning disabilities and Mental Health services.

Members were informed that the Council had done well in:-

- Promoting and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- Developing End of Life care.
- More services for carers.
- Access to community based leisure / learning opportunities.
- Engaging with and involving people in service development.
- Developing focus on volunteering.
- Provision of information about services.
- Community safety initiatives so vulnerable people feel safe at home.
- Joint approach to health and care needs – avoids formal disputes.
- Targeted support for those needing financial advice and support.
- Employment support for those with disability.
- Local and sub-regional coordination of safeguarding work.

Members were advised that key areas for development were:

- Providing greater choice to enable people to remain independent at home
- Enabling people to help themselves by providing better information and advice
- Locally supported living for those with more complex needs
- Timely assessment of care needs and agreement of self directed support;
- Employment support for carers
- Safeguarding training for all sectors.

Members raised questions regarding the provision of funding to carers for respite and were advised that Stockton Council and the Primary Care Trust jointly funded financial help on a case by case basis. If it was totally NHS funded, the PCT should fully cover the costs but in other cases the carers could be asked to contribute.

Queries were raised as to the monitoring of carers who were relatives to the individual to ensure that the correct level of care was being provided. Members were advised that these issues were addressed through the care management assessment and review arrangements and through the safeguarding processes where appropriate.

Members queried whether the new self-direct support system would enable service users to control the time and frequency of carers to fit in with their own preferences. Members were advised that the arrangements would enable service users to employ someone to deliver care individualised to their own requirements if possible.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The Scrutiny Officer will send Members the web link for the publication 'Ten questions to ask if you are scrutinising adult and social care'.

5 Quarterly Progress Update - Review of Older People's Strategy

Members considered the assessment of progress in relation to the recommendations from the review of the Older People's Strategy.

Members queried how older people found out about outdoor activities and were

advised that officers would investigate and inform Members.

Members observed that a number of the swimming sessions were not free for the over 60s and under 16s and that some of the advertising appeared to be misleading. Officers undertook to investigate and report to Members.

Members asked for further information on future progress reports on:

- Recommendation 4 – the role of the older peoples champion
- Recommendation 20 – progress in respect of “drop in” meeting facilities
- Recommendation 24 – the implications of the discontinuation of funding for No Cold Calling Zones

The assessment of progress be agreed and officers provide the further information requested to the Committee as set out above.

6 Work Programme

The Scrutiny Officer advised that Executive Scrutiny had met and Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusions Select Committee had been allocated school catering as the next topic for scrutiny.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.