

Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 7th October, 2008.

Present: Cllr Mick Stoker (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell.

Officers: Ruth Hill (CESC); Mark, Rowell, Roland Todd (DNS); Judith Trainer, Fiona Shayler (LD)

Also in attendance: Chris Livingstone (Job Centre Plus); Mrs C Clark, Mrs T Fraser (Parent Governor Representatives).

Apologies: were submitted by Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Mick Womphrey.

CAS 28/08 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs Cains declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda item no. 6 - Scrutiny Review of Older People's Strategy further to being a trustee of the Carers Centre, Stockton.

Cllr Mrs Fletcher declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda item no. 6 - Scrutiny Review of Older People's Strategy further to being a volunteer for Citizens Advice Bureau.

CAS 29/08 Minutes of 21st May and 3rd June 2008 - For Signing

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st May and 3rd June 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CAS 30/08 Minutes of the Joint Meeting held on 30th July 2008.

Members noted the minutes of the joint meeting held on 30th July 2008.

CAS 31/08 Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 4th August 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th August 2008 as a correct record.

CAS 32/08 Scrutiny Review of Older People's Strategy

Members were provided with two presentations from Roland Todd, Labour Market Co-ordinator and Chris Livingstone, Job Centre Plus.

Roland Todd, provided a presentation with regard to the current employment figures and related data for the over 50's in relation to the Older Peoples Strategy Action Plan. Information was provided on the numbers of over 50's claiming Jobseeker's allowance and incapacity benefits. Detail was provided on area based initiatives through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) Round 4 which included nine projects under the Employment and Enterprise Package and three projects under the Health and Worklessness Package.

The Communities Fund -Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) would replace

NRF funding. £13.5 million had been allocated over a period of 3 years. There were three aims:- to tackle worklessness, to improve skill levels and to increase levels of enterprise. This year had been a transitional year with funding available until March 2009, it was anticipated that the Communities Fund would start delivery from February 2009. Improved recording of beneficiary data has already started with the introduction of the transition year and this will be further enhanced when delivery commences in early 2009.

Discussion was held by Members on people over 50 that have chosen to take early retirement/redunancy who may not want to return to work and may/may not be claiming any benefits. Many of these people could be too busy to return to work due to family commitments or could be working in the voluntary sector etc. It was explained that support would be available to older people through the Communities Fund projects but that participation in the programmes would be voluntary.

Chris Livingstone, Job Centre Plus, gave a presentation on the mainstream services provided. Information was provided on New Deal for aged 50 plus and the Flexible New Deal that would replace this system. The Tees Valley Jobcentre would be piloting the Flexible New Deal and were currently going out to tender for this pilot.

Members discussed how the long term unemployed were able to cover the cost of transport and other barriers that could make it not beneficial for them to work such as childcare costs, loss of benefits, equipment, clothing etc.

Discussion was also held on the Employment and Support Allowance process, this would be coming into force for new claimants from 29th October and would be phased in for people already claiming incapacity benefits. Discussion was held on whether people with illnesses/disabilities were able to find an appropriate job to meet their needs and how flexible employers would be for people with carer responsibilities.

CONCLUDED that the information received be noted.

CAS
33/08 **Work Programme**

Members were reminded of the 'Are you being served...well?' event to be held on Wednesday 22nd October 2008.

The next meeting of this Select Committee would be held on Thursday, 30th October and Elizabeth Shassere, Locality Director of Public Health would be in attendance to give evidence.

It was anticipated that the final report would be presented to Executive Scrutiny Committee on 24th February 2008.