

**Committee:**                **Scrutiny Committee for Social Services and Health**

**Date:**                     31 July 2003

**Title:**                     Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Social Services and Health held at 10.00am at Pelham House, St Andrews Lane, Lewes, East Sussex

**Subject:**                 Minutes

**Attending:**              Garvican Lock McPherson Neighbour Tunwell Webb Whetstone

Lead Officer -             Roger Howarth

Legal Adviser -          Richard Partridge, Assistant Director of Legal and Community Services

Chief Officer -            David Archibald, Director of Social Services

## 7.     MINUTES

7.1     The Committee considered the minutes of 7 May 2003.

7.2     **RESOLVED** – to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2003 as a correct record.

7.3     The Committee also considered the minutes of 8 July 2003.

7.4     Some members of the Committee expressed concern that it had not been recorded that the party whip had been used at the last meeting in relation to the Chairman's vote. In accordance with Standing Order 21 of the Constitution (page C182 of the Members Handbook), a party whip may be imposed, but when considering any matter in respect of which a member of an overview and scrutiny committee is subject to a party whip the member must declare the existence of the whip, and the nature of it, before the commencement of the committee's deliberations on the matter. The declaration and the detail of the whipping arrangements should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

7.5     The Chairman conceded that his party group had taken a view with regard to the closure of Castleham Industries and agreed that the following sentence should be included in the minutes before the resolution:-

The Chairman declared that his party group had previously stated that they were against the closure of Castleham Industries.

## 8.     URGENT ITEMS

8.1     The Chairman indicated that he had an urgent item for consideration at the end of the agenda in relation to the Moreton Centre.

9. REPORTS

9.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

10. COUNCIL PLAN – END OF YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

10.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive.

10.2 The Director of Social Services responded to a number of specific queries raised by members on particular items in the Plan.

10.3 The Committee discussed the review of directly funded homes and agreed that it would be useful to receive an update report concerning the review at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be held on 25 September 2003. The Committee also agreed that it would be helpful if the update included an explanation of the actual savings achieved.

10.4 The Committee also discussed the target at 1.1 of Appendix 2 of the report in relation to the reduction of the number of children in independent fostering agencies. The Committee agreed that the target seemed inappropriate and considered whether the target should be how many foster carers we need rather than setting a target of 30 foster carers. The Committee requested that the Scrutiny Lead Officer refer this target back to the Chief Executives for further consideration and possible amendment.

10.5 Overall, the Committee agreed that some of the targets were unrealistic and the presentation of the report meant that for some of the targets more explanation was needed in order for members to obtain a full understanding of why a particular target was amber or red. The Scrutiny lead Officer agreed to refer the matter back to the Chief Executives Department and ask them to look at target setting and also the practical presentation of the report in order to make it easier to read and clearer so as to distinguish when a target is red, amber or green.

10.6 RESOLVED – to (1) note the end of year report;

(2) request the Director of Social Services to submit a report to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of Social Services and Health on the review of directly funded homes, including an explanation of the actual savings achieved; and

(3) request the Scrutiny Lead Officer to report back to the Chief Executives on some of the targets and general presentation of the report.

11. FORWARD PLAN

11.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period July to October 2003.

11.2 The Committee agreed that it was good scrutiny practice to request more detail about items on the Plan in order to influence Cabinet decisions. The Committee agreed that it was sometimes difficult to establish exactly what a report was about, but noted that there was a contact name given for each item on the plan. Members were advised that they could request further detail about a particular item from the contact name if so required.

11.3 The Committee agreed that it would be helpful at the next meeting to receive an update from the Director of Social Services on Home Care Services.

11.4 RESOLVED – to note the Forward Plan.

12. JOINT REVIEW ACTION PLAN

12.1 The Committee considered a report by Director of Social Services.

12.2 RESOLVED – to note the report.

13. SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

13.1 The Committee had agreed at their meeting in March 2003 to establish a Project Board which would monitor the recommendations of the Best Value Review of Older People Services. The Committee membership had now changed and the Scrutiny Lead Officer requested that Members form a new Project Board. A date would then be set for the board to meet.

13.2 RESOLVED – to establish a Project Board to monitor the recommendations of the Best Value Review of Older Peoples Services consisting of the three following members:

Councillors Lock, Neighbour and Tunwell.

14. URGENT ITEM

Moreton Centre

14.1 The Chairman requested further information from the Director of Social Services following Cabinet's decision to close the Moreton Centre. In particular, the Chairman sought clarification about the cost of respite care.

14.2 The Director of Social Services was able to inform the Committee that the majority of residents had now been moved and only two remained. Good progress had been made with the contract for the provision of respite care and Social Services was working closely with the PCT on a Business Plan. The contracts were not finalised as yet and therefore remained commercially sensitive and the Director of Social Services was unable to reveal further details. The Director of Social Services agreed to keep the Chairman updated.