

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Social Services and Health held at County Hall, Lewes on 30 November 2004

22. PRESENT - Councillor Webb (Chairman)
Councillors Dyason, Garvican, McPherson, Tunwell,
Whetstone and Woodall
- Chief Officer: David Archibald, Director of Social Services
Legal Adviser: Angela Reid, Head of Legal Services
Scrutiny Lead Officer: Mary Hayler, Scrutiny Lead Officer
- ALSO PRESENT - Councillor Mrs Stroude, Lead Member for Children and
Young People; and Libraries and Councillor Glazier (on
behalf of Councillor Mrs Waite, Lead Member for Social
Services and Health) (for minute 28)

Before the commencement of the meeting the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated the Director of Social Services and his staff on retaining the two star rating from the Commission for Social Care Inspection for its performance over the last year.

23. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

23.1 RESOLVED – to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2004.

24. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

24.1 Councillor Waite, Lead Member for Social Services and Health.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

25.1 Councillor Glazier reported that he was a Non-Executive Director of Bexhill and Rother Primary Care Trust, but was satisfied that his interest was not a prejudicial one.

25.2 Councillor Neighbour declared a non-prejudicial interest in that section of the Reconciling Policy and Resources report (minute 28 below) concerning inter-agency adoption fees because his daughter occasionally carried out private adoption screening.

26. URGENT ITEM

26.1 The Chairman reported that he proposed to take as an urgent item of business Appendix 3 to the report on Reconciling Policy and Resources which had not been able to be circulated with the agenda because further important work on aspects of the service delivery and savings plans had been required.

27. REPORTS

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

28. RECONCILING POLICY AND RESOURCES

28.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.

28.2 The Chairman explained that the Lead Member for Social Services and Health, Councillor Waite, was unable to be present at this meeting. However, he and the Director had met Councillor Waite prior to the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the financial and service planning proposals. Councillor Glazier was present in Councillor Waite's place. The Lead Member for Children and Young People; and Libraries, Councillor Mrs Stroude, was also present to answer Members' questions.

28.3 The Director of Social Services reported that, at his meeting with the Lead Member and Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Waite had asked for further work to be undertaken on some aspects of the service delivery and savings plans set out in Appendix 3 to the report. That work had been done and a revised summary sheet setting out the savings proposed was circulated to Members.

28.4 Members noted that the saving proposed in respect of 47a Western Road Mental Health Day Centre arose as a result of the outcome of a review by the Mental Health Partnership Board of Mental Health Day Services earlier in the year. It was suggested that the reference to 47a Western Road should make clear that the saving would be achieved by the closure and reprovisioning of the service. The Director of Social Services undertook to circulate to Members the Mental Health Partnership Board's final report on the review.

28.5 The Committee was also concerned that the reference to control totals for home care should make clear that the proposed savings action was to limit, rather than reduce the control totals.

28.6 RESOLVED – to inform the Cabinet that the Committee:

(1) deplores the underfunding by Government for Social Services provision in East Sussex which is responsible for the reductions being forced on the Service;

(2) recommends that the proposed saving of £65,000, by reducing support for disabled children and their families by reducing the outreach service or the sessional worker budget, be reconsidered and savings achieved elsewhere; and

(3) recommends that the proposed saving of £15,000, by reducing the Fostering Support Budget, be reconsidered and savings achieved elsewhere.

29. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FINANCE GRANT 2005-2006

29.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Social Services.

29.2 RESOLVED – to (1) note the provisional recommendations made for the allocation of the Community Partnership Finance Grant for 2005/2006; and

(2) nominate Councillor Tunwell to join the Steering Group for the grants review process.

30. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DIRECT PAYMENTS

30.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Project Board.

30.2 The Chairman of the Project Board, Councillor Tunwell, thanked his fellow Board Members, Councillors Neighbour and Webb, and Mary Hayler, the Scrutiny Lead Officer for their support on the Review and commended it to the Scrutiny Committee.

30.3 RESOLVED – to (1) receive and agree the Project Board's report for submission to Cabinet for comment on 15 December 2004 and County Council for final approval on 22 February 2005, subject to the following amendments:-

- Paragraph 5.1 – the words ‘an adult’ to be substituted for ‘a child’ so that the last sentence of the first main paragraph reads “Parents of an adult with learning disabilities”;
- Paragraph 5.14 – the words ‘structured’ to be added so that the first sentence reads “Clients suggested that some form of structured network with other direct Payments recipients would be useful”; and
- Recommendation 9 – the words ‘ the number of complaints’ to be substituted for ‘this number’ so that the first part of recommendation 9 reads “Social Services Department investigate the reasons for the high number of upheld complaints and include their findings and proposed actions to reduce the number of complaints in the interim monitoring report in six months’ time.”

(2) thank the Project Board Chairman, Councillor Tunwell, the other Board Members and the officers involved in the Scrutiny Review of Direct Payments for their commitment and hard work.

31. CAREFINDER WEBSITE: PROGRESS

31.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Social Services.

31.2 RESOLVED – to (1) note the further progress made on the Carefinder Website; and

(2) request the Director of Social Services to notify Committee Members by E Mail of the timescale for completion of the enhanced search facilities by District.

32. IMPLEMENTATION OF HOSPITAL DISCHARGE POLICY AND EVALUATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

32.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Social Services.

32.2 RESOLVED – to (1) note the further action on hospital discharge arrangements, following the Scrutiny Review of User and Care Involvement in Older People’s Services which reported in March 2004;

(2) request the Director of Social Services to circulate to Committee Members, in electronic format, an update on the evaluation of the discharge processes in operation at Eastbourne Hospital; and

(3) request that an evaluation of the processes in Hastings Hospital and comparison with those at Eastbourne Hospital form part of the final monitoring report on the scrutiny review to be brought before the March Committee.

33. ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

33.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Social Services.

33.2 Members were reminded that they had endorsed the recommendation of the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) Project Board that the Education and Social Services Departments’ Joint Action/Business Plan for Looked After Children (LAC) be brought to this meeting. They noted that the exam results were encouraging and an improvement on the previous year.

33.3 RESOLVED – to note the report.

34. QUARTER TWO MONITORING REPORT AGAINST THE 2004-05 COUNCIL PLAN

34.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Performance Management.

34.2 RESOLVED – to (1) note the achievements in paragraph 2 and the recommendations for action in Appendix 1 to the report; and

(2) agree that the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) Review Board be reconvened to consider BVPI targets for 2005/2006 and the membership should again comprise Councillors McPherson, Webb and Whetstone.

35. FORWARD PLAN

35.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 24 November 2004 to 31 March 2005.

35.2 Members noted that the item on Harnessing Family and Community Support, which was listed for the Lead Member for Children and Young People; and Libraries meeting on 3 December 2004, would now be considered at the following meeting in January 2005.

35.3 The Director of Social Services advised the Committee that the Children's Act had now received Royal Assent and he anticipated that consultation documents and guidance from the DfES would be available very shortly. In addition, the Department of Health had indicated that a Green Paper on Adult Services would be issued in December for wide consultation, the aim being to improve and build on existing services. Guidance on both the roles of Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Services was also expected in the near future.

35.4 The Scrutiny Lead Officer reported that the first meeting of the Best Value Scrutiny Review Board on the local provisions for adults with learning disabilities, would be held on 14 December 2004. Board Members were Councillors Barnes, Neighbour and Webb.

35.5 RESOLVED – to (1) note the Forward Plan; and

(2) note the information reported by the Director of Social Services and the Scrutiny Lead Officer.