

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Adult Social Care held at County Hall, Lewes on 11 November 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Waite (Chairman)
Councillors Belsey, Healy, Ost, Scott, Taylor and Mrs Tidy

Chief Officer: Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care

Scrutiny Lead Officer: Gillian Mauger, Scrutiny Lead Officer

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Bentley, Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Councillor Elkin, Lead Cabinet Member for Learning and Schools Effectiveness
Becky Shaw, Chief Executive

23. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

23.1 RESOLVED to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3 September 2010.

24. APOLOGIES

24.1 An apology for absence was received from Janet Colvert, LINK representative

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

25.1 Councillors Belsey and Healy declared personal interests as they were trustees of Age Concern. They did not consider this interest to be prejudicial.

25.2 Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest as he was a residential care home owner. He did not consider this interest to be prejudicial.

26. REPORTS

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

27. RECONCILING POLICY AND RESOURCES (RPR)

27.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care outlining progress made by the Department to shift resources from working age adults to older people services. In comparison with other Local Authorities, East Sussex currently spent a disproportionate amount on services for working age adults in comparison to services for older people, and given the ageing population in East Sussex, it was important to ensure funding was concentrated in those areas of most need. Whilst the Department had already shifted a significant amount of resources from one service to the other, the shift was only limited and this rate needed to increase.

27.2 In response to questions by the Committee the following points were made:

- The Department was able to increase efficiency savings by changing the service model that some service users received. More working age adults had the capacity, and the desire, to move from residential to supported accommodation and the Department was working with them to facilitate this. In doing so the Department was also able to reduce costs and access other funding streams to support service users.
- The current programme of work had made savings by identified efficiencies, rather than making reductions in services. Any efficiency savings that were made within services for working age adults was reinvested in services for older people.
- The programme of specialist supported housing and extra care housing provided a broad range of accommodation. The various projects were at different points in terms of delivery, capital available for work and the other organisations involved. At present it was unclear as to how changes in housing benefit rules would impact on this work.
- The Committee would have an opportunity to scrutinise the targets to reduce high cost placements through the RPR process.
- For any changes to services the Department carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and, where service users were moving establishments and residential units were closing down, statutory consultation was also carried out. During any transition between services there was also a higher level of monitoring by the Department until the service was stable
- When changes to services were made the aim was to ensure that the specification was more outcomes focused and service users were part of these discussions to determine the type of outcomes they wished to achieve.
- Whilst it was recognised that some service users received particularly high cost services, given the large number of people the Department supported, these costs did not have a significant impact on the overall budget.
- There was not always a clear relationship between the level of need of a service user and the cost of their service and this needed to be tightened up. The Department was working with providers to bring down costs and improve the quality of services. However, if this was not achievable the Department did have to consider if it was necessary to move a service user to another provider. Through 'best interests proceedings' the Department could move a service user if they felt that doing so was in their best interests. In weighing up the options for doing this the Department had to consider the possibility of facing a judicial review over the decision and the financial impact that this could have. East Sussex was one of several local authorities that were facing this dilemma at present.
- Whilst the voluntary and community sector in East Sussex was mixed, there were some very good organisations and a great deal of work has been done over the last few years to help them build capacity and develop. The benefits of involving this sector in providing services were the development of innovation and the added value that these services could bring.
- The Department was currently developing a live resource directory that provided information on all public, independent and voluntary and community sector providers. This would be available for staff as well as the general public to help people understand the range of services available.
- Too many people with mental health issues were in residential care and these people were often simply marking time rather than making progress. There was a need alter the services they accessed to ensure that they were outcome focused.
- The changes in the management structure within Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust had been viewed differently by the Department and Health. The Department considered the changes to have increased the number of carers' assessments and service users reviews that had been carried out, as well as a reduction in the time taken to complete them and an increase in the numbers of service users moved out of residential care. Feedback from service users had also been positive.

- Changes in welfare benefits would have a significant impact on the quality of life for some people and this could lead to an increase in demand for services from the Department, as well as reducing the income it currently receives. It was hard to know exactly how these changes would impact at present and it might be necessary to make late adjustments to services that could be delivered.
- The Department was considering piloting a monitoring tool that tracked where people were within the system. This would help the Department and Health understand where people were going after they left hospital and would help them know what services were having the best impact on service users.
- There was a range of monitoring data available that scrutiny could use to highlight topics for future scrutiny work, such as budget information, performance data, business plan targets, CQC monitoring reports, the annual complaints report and feedback from the voluntary and community sector.

27.3 The Committee requested that figures for the number of services users supported within each category be provided.

27.4 RESOLVED to (1) support the shift of resources from working age adults to older people to redress the current imbalance of spending; and

(2) request a further report in 12 months to enable the Committee to monitor the outcomes for service users as a result of any changes in service provision.

28. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PROJECT

28.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care outlining the progress that had been made with phase three of the Supporting People Commissioning Project, which related to specialist services for specific client groups. Funding for Supporting People was no longer ring fenced by national government, although there was an expectation that local authorities would continue to use the funding in this area.

28.2 In response to questions by the Committee the following points were made:

- Supporting People funding was being reduced over the next four years. It was expected that the reduction would be 2.8% per year, a cut of 12% in real terms. Currently there was a consensus between the County Council and the District and Borough Councils as to how the reduction in funding would be managed. However, if the reduction was larger than expected there would need to be a re-evaluation of what could be delivered in the future, with some services needing to be cut. It was likely that this would be very contentious, with District and Borough councils likely to have different priorities as to which services should remain.
- Phases one and two of Supporting People provided universally accessible services across the county based on need. With phase three the services were more specialist and provision was concentrated along the coastal strip, where there was more demand.

28. RESOLVED to: (1) note the progress made to date with phase three of the Supporting People Commissioning Project, and

(2) request a further report on the Supporting People Commissioning Project to enable the Committee to monitor the impact that savings have had on the provision of services across the county.

29. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT

29.1 Councillor Tidy, chairman of the Review Board, presented the report on the findings and recommendations of the review of Integrated Community Equipment Service.

29.2 RESOLVED to note the report and request a further report be brought to the Committee in March 2011 to update members on the progress towards developing a new model for the Integrated Community Equipment Service.

30. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

30.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Governance and Community Services setting out the current work programme for the Committee. Dates for the visit to the Isabel Blackman Centre were discussed and it was agreed to circulate these outside of the meeting. The committee development session would focus on 'scrutiny in challenging times' and the session would also be used to develop the work programme.

30.2 RESOLVED to note the scrutiny work programme.

31. FORWARD PLAN

31.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 November 2010 to 28 February 2011.

31.2 RESOLVED to note the Forward Plan.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12.45pm