

**At a meeting of the ADULT SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP BOARD held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY 29 JULY 2008 at 2.30pm**

**Present:-**

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

Councillors G Hall, Leadbitter and Timmins.

**Also Present:-**

Neil Revely	-	Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services
Graham King	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Joan Reed	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Marilyn Wilkie	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Julie Gray	-	Community and Cultural Services
Martin Barry	-	City Solicitor's
Andrew Stewart	-	City Treasurer's
Gillian Gibson	-	Sunderland TPCT
Julie Marshall	-	Age Concern
Gill Charman	-	PDA
Ailsa Martin	-	Sunderland Carers' Centre

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Watson, Norma Hardy, Lesley Lane, Alan Patchett, Ernie Thompson, Tricia Doyle, Debbie Burnicle, Russell Patten and John Fisher.

**Receipt of Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Minutes**

6. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10 June 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **Green Paper – Case for Change**

At the last meeting of the Adult Social Care Partnership Board, Members had discussed how they might respond to the consultation document and agreed to discuss the issue with their representative groups.

The Chair suggested that given the breadth and depth of the Green Paper, it may be useful to devote a whole meeting to the discussion of the consultation response. Councillor Hall supported this proposal and commented that it would be useful to select specific areas to focus on prior to the meeting so that Officers would prepare relevant information.

Ailsa Martin reported that 'Voice for Carers' would certainly welcome this approach and would appreciate the key issues and implications being drawn out so as to inform their discussions with other groups.

Neil Revely advised that if any groups required additional support or briefings on the Green Paper, then they could contact Graham King for assistance.

Following discussion, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Adult Social Care Partnership Board on Tuesday 16 September 2008 be dedicated to discussion on the Green Paper – The Case for Change and development of a response to the consultation.

At the motion of the Chairman, it was agreed to vary the order of business for the remaining items on the agenda.

## **Strategic Advice Plan**

Joan Reed, the Strategic Change Manager made a presentation to the Board on the review of advice services across Sunderland.

Sunderland has a good track record in delivering high quality advice services and the review was looking at where advice services currently were and where they needed to go. The review was instigated to look specifically at social welfare advice across the City, not just the Council.

Large numbers of people are helped with social welfare problems in the City including applications for benefits, debt problems, eviction proceedings and in to work support and benefits. It is often found that people face more than one problem and have to deal with several issues at the same time. It is anticipated that demand for services will grow to meet the demands of an ageing population, financial exclusion and mounting debt problems and changes to incapacity benefit and the drive to get people back into work.

The review was to take stock of current provision and would produce a Strategic Advice Plan to co-ordinate activity for the next three years and would also fit with the Directorate's three year planning cycle. The first draft of this plan, 'The Route to Advice in Sunderland' had been pulled together.

The review had identified a very positive picture in Sunderland and a strong message about partnership came through and making the route to advice simple. There are five key intentions which would be outlined in the Strategic Advice Plan:-

1. To confirm the City Council's role in relation to advice provision and development.
2. To work with partners to develop City-wide access and choice in relation to first tier advice provision.
3. To increase accessibility to specialist advice provision available within the City.
4. To provide more effective and accessible advice services for vulnerable or other hard to reach groups.
5. To maximise and use as efficiently as possible the investment into advice services within the City.

Joan also reported that Sunderland was being held up as an example of good practice and had been approached to develop a Community Legal Advice Network.

Councillor Timmins commented that the presentation was excellent and stressed the importance of advice services, particularly where problems could be prevented through receiving good advice. He highlighted that accessibility of services was vital and this is where corporate matters came into play in linking to call centres so that no-one would be excluded. Councillor Timmins also drew attention to the voluntary sector providers as commissioning would not deliver everything that was required.

The Chairman recalled that in the past there had been neighbourhood advice centres which were governed by local people where people could go along for advice on any subject without an appointment.

Joan Reed advised that there had been a range of these services which almost by default had become focused on benefits advice. This was not the case now as a high number of queries were centred around employment law and housing. It was felt that neighbourhood advice services would be achieved in the future and the customer service network of the Council would provide an opportunity to support groups in local areas.

Councillor Hall noted that there was sometimes confusion about who should be contacted on what issue and the ideal situation would be a one stop contact centre. Some duplication in services did currently exist and a single point of contact would be an advancement. It was necessary to have local people with local knowledge available.

Julie Marshall highlighted that the Community Legal Services Partnership had previously been a good way of getting providers together so that services were not duplicated. She stated that Age Concern Sunderland had brought in £7m of under-claimed benefits to City residents but also provided advocacy services for residents. However, there were only three workers available to deal with all requests. The Chairman agreed that the amount of money brought in by Age Concern from benefits had been tremendous.

Ailsa Martin reflected on how much the Carers' Centre had valued working with Advice Services and had felt very positive about the direction of travel. However she referred to the situation in Hull where the inception of a Community Legal Advice Centre had resulted in a net loss of service rather than a gain. Many workers in the voluntary sector are concerned about the implications of national developments.

Joan Reed stated that she was aware that a number of Community Legal Advice Networks (CLANs) had not been successful, but although a commitment had been made to look at developing a network there was no requirement to establish one. A Community Legal Advice Service did exist and this brought providers together under one umbrella. Neil Revely added that the Authority wished to be satisfied that the CLAN would be beneficial and add value or enhance existing provision before they signed up.

Having considered the presentation, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the information on the advice services review be noted.

### **Social Inclusion Strategy – How do we take it forward in Sunderland?**

Marilyn Wilkie, General Manager within the Mental Health Service made a presentation to the Board on working towards social inclusion for those with mental health problems in Sunderland.

The Government had identified the social exclusion of people suffering mental health problems as a major issue and published two reports on the topic in 2004 through the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). The National Social Inclusion Programme was then established to bring agencies together and co-ordinate implementation of the reports of the SEU.

Sunderland had also used the reports from the SEU as a basis for local work which had included a mapping exercise across all mental health services and organisations, the production of a local 'Social Inclusion Paper' and a multi-agency Social Inclusion Event. A number of practical ideas had been identified to take forward social inclusion in Sunderland. These were:-

- Incorporate mental health as a priority with Local Strategic Partnerships.
- Build socially inclusive mental health policies into Local Authorities' Equality Strategies.
- Set up specialist and mainstream service providers, e.g. employment/education to ensure cross-referenced opportunities.

- Draw up protocols for joint working between mental health services, Jobcentre Plus, local Colleges etc.
- People with mental health problems and carers consulted and represented on boards of Mental Health and Primary Care Trusts.
- Mental Health services provide training/advice in return for mainstream services adopting more inclusive and welcoming services.
- Draw up a directory of local services, including arts and leisure opportunities to provide ideas for individuals and referral options for GPs.
- Themed surgeries in CMHTs for awareness of opportunities.
- Transport needs of people with mental health problems are included with each Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Accessibility Planning process.

The Chairman thanked Marilyn for her presentation and commented that it was right to highlight the stigma which was attached to mental illness. There was an impression that mental health services had been low priority in the NHS but this was now changing.

Councillor Hall stated that there was a lack of awareness from the public about mental illness and many did not realise that it was covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. He also believed that a lot of mental illness was hidden and the actual number of sufferers was not known.

Councillor Timmins highlighted the importance of the community being responsive to the work being done on social inclusion in order to engender the necessary social change. He suggested that the Area Committees could be platforms for this sort of work as they are closer to local people.

Ailsa Martin referred to comments made in Marilyn's presentation on the poor general health of those with mental health problems. The Carers' Centre was supporting proposals for new GP contracts to pay specific attention to the 'ordinary' health problems of those with mental illness. Ailsa added that carers projects were being lobbied to nominate carer governors for Trusts and it was understood that service users would also be represented.

Integration into the community was highlighted by Julie Marshall as an important factor in preventing mental illness. She commented that elderly people often experience social isolation which can impact on mental health. Neil Revely added that it was both the responsibility of the Board and individual organisations to do something about these things and to audit check all that was in place to ensure that everything possible was being done.

Gillian Gibson stated that she was aware that services were not always responsive and it would be helpful to have a mechanism to inform the commissioning of services for these groups. There would need to be an integrated approach to assessment to include all groups. Julie Gray highlighted that Community and Cultural Services had been successful in aligning service delivery arrangements to improve physical health and would aim to support this being achieved with respect to mental health.

Councillor Leadbitter advised that the Health and Well-Being Review Committee had discussed GP led health centres and it had been suggested that mental health counselling services should be included within GP contracts. It was considered that this would be a positive development if it came to fruition.

The Chairman commented that the Council had shown a level of commitment to addressing the issue and Councillor Hall suggested that this may be an opportunity to take stock of what was in place at the current time and to formulate bullet point answers to the questions raised in Marilyn's presentation. Neil Revely undertook to bring a paper back to the Board outlining the response to the practical ideas which had been developed to take forward social inclusion in Sunderland.

The Chairman having welcomed this approach, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that the presentation on the Social Inclusion Strategy be noted.

### **Carers Strategy – National Developments and Local Implementation**

The Head of Performance, Commissioning and Change submitted a report to inform the Board of the draft Carers Strategy and also outlining the implications for Sunderland from the National Carers Strategy.

Graham King outlined the report to the Board stating that this was a brief update on the Partnership Board's commitment to supporting the development of a Sunderland multi-agency strategy. The Multi-Agency Strategy Group has met on two occasions and has pulled together a draft strategy which aims to put the national strategy on a local level.

The main outcomes to be achieved are grouped into the five areas of Prosperous City, Healthy City, Safe City, Learning City and Attractive and Inclusive City. Action plans to support the implementation of the Strategy are being developed and agreed within partner organisations. It is intended that the action plans will be complete by mid August and the Strategy finalised in September.

Ailsa Martin reported that 'Voice for Carers' had discussed the position with the Carers' Strategy and the Group felt that the Strategy Group did give a comprehensive overview of where the Strategy should be, were comfortable for this opportunity to influence this and valued the approach being taken in Sunderland.

The Chairman commented that it was pleasing to see carers receiving recognition for their role and felt it was important to address the health needs of carers. Councillor Hall also emphasised the need for carers to receive support, particularly around mental health issues and the importance of making sure that carers are aware of the mechanisms in place to support them.

Ailsa Martin advised that the Carers' Centre had worked with the Council call centre to try and identify carers who might not previously have been known to services and more than 60 had been identified in the run up to Carers' Day. The key thing was to get Primary Care involved and fully on board as this helps the identification process.

Graham King advised that with representatives from public health contributing to the Strategy Group, links had begun to be made with Primary Care Services. It was proposed that the Board should 'own' the Actions Plan underpinning the Strategy in order to make sure that all partners do what they have signed up to do.

Neil Revely raised the issue of involving private sector employers in the Carers' Strategy. The Council should take the lead in the public sector and the Chairman highlighted that the Authority should be seen as a model employer. Ailsa Martin reported that the Carers' Centre had been working with employers to develop a Carers' Charter and were also hoping that the Sunderland Echo would publicise the work done by Ben Hoare Bell which featured in the national strategy.

Councillor Hall enquired how much of the Strategy would be in the ownership of the Council and Neil Revely advised that it was the aspiration for the Partnership Board to own the Strategy but it would not be possible to hold employers to account for non-statutory responsibilities. Councillor Hall also noted that this issue could be referred to Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee for adoption and monitoring. The Chairman concurred with this and also drew attention to the role that the Local Strategic Partnership would have in considering the Strategy.

Ailsa Martin highlighted the issue of young carers and asked how children's issues would be related to the whole Strategy. Graham King advised that work was already being done with Children's Services to explore how this could be achieved.

Graham King advised that he would be happy to receive any comments on the draft Strategy via email.

Having considered the report, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report and accompanying documents be received for information; and
- (ii) the Board will perform a monitoring role with regard to the Action Plans underpinning the Carers' Strategy.

### **World Class Commissioning**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Board.

### **Community Development Plan/Compact**

The Head of Community Services, Community and Cultural Services Directorate submitted a report updating the Board on the work progressing through the Community Development Strategy Group to develop the detailed Action Plan for the Community Development Plan.

Julie Gray reported that the formal consultation on the Sunderland Compact had been launched and would run until 19 September 2008. The consultation is based on the main Compact document with Codes of Practice on Funding and Procurement and Equalities still under development.

Following the end of the consultation process and any work emerging as a result, it is intended to take the final documentation to the Sunderland Partnership in the autumn. Organisations will then be invited to become signatories to the Compact.

Julie Gray also informed that Sunderland CVS had accessed Working Neighbourhoods funding to employ a part-time Compact Engagement Officer until 30 September to work with voluntary and community organisations to ensure that as much of the sector as possible is in a position to sign up to the Compact in the autumn. The Chairman enquired if there was any possibility of the post being extended beyond 30 September and Julie advised that it was hoped that it could be extended.

In response to a query from Graham King, Julie advised that the Board did not need to make a formal response to the consultation as organisations around the table had been represented in the process of developing the Compact and it had also gone through the Local Strategy Partnership (LSP) process. Bringing the Compact to the Board was about raising awareness of the document and keeping the Board abreast of developments.

Ailsa Martin stated that the Compact had been discussed at 'Voice' and people were keen to take it back to their various organisations, but not until all the Codes were completed. There was a lot of positive feeling around the Compact. Julie added that the LSP were committed to getting this right even if it meant that deadlines had to be extended.

Having considered the report, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that the update on the development of the Community Development Plan and Sunderland Compact be noted.

### **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 16 September 2008 at 2.30 p.m.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) F. ANDERSON,  
Chairman.