

At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELL-BEING REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2006 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor R. Bainbridge in the Chair

Councillors Blyth, J. Heron, Leadbitter, Paul Maddison, Richardson, M. Smith, A. Wilson and N. Wright.

Also present Councillor P Watson

Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited all those present to introduce themselves.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Dixon, S. Watson and W. Stephenson together with Ms. C. Harries.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 13th September, 2006

In relation to page 2 of the minutes, Mr. Paul Staines, Review Co-ordinator advised Members that Easington PCT would be bringing an update report to the Committee regarding the Branch Surgery closure. A letter had been sent to Nexus, who had met with the PCT to discuss transport issues. Mr. Staines also advised that, at the Committee's request, the PCT had sent a further letter to patients. This had resulted in 33 telephone enquiries and 9 letters to date. The PCT had expressed satisfaction as they felt the consultation had been more robust as a result of the Committee's involvement.

Referring to page 4 of the minutes, Councillor J. Heron placed on record the need to recognise the positive and proactive approach the Committee has taken in improving services and pursuing health and well-being inequalities in Sunderland.

Referring to page 5 of the minutes, the Review Co-ordinator explained that the next set of minutes for the Cherry Knowle Project Board were due to be signed off in November and would be forwarded subsequently. The Board was not due to meet again until January 2007.

With regard to page 5, Ms. Jane Hedley, Legal Adviser informed the Committee that the guidance regarding the inspection powers of LINKs was silent and the Committee would have to await the Department of Health direction following the consultations that closed on 7th September.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 13th September, 2006 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (Including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

Performance Report

The Acting Director of Adult Services (on behalf of all partners with an interest in City health and well-being) submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek Member comment on key performance indicators and also a new way of reporting into Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Graham King, Head of Performance and Development, Adult Services advised Members that the format of the report had been revised to give a focus on the seven key outcomes in the 'Our Health Our Care, Our Say : A New Direction of Community Services White Paper' published in 2006.

In response to a question from Councillor N. Wright regarding extra care housing provision, Mr. King acknowledged that there had been some disappointment regarding the bidding process for developing extra care. The procedure involved finding a partner for procurement and submitting a bid to the Extra Care Housing Fund. This year there had been no successful bids in the north east. Following representations from local Councils they were asked to resubmit their bids and the result would be determined in mid October. Mr. King also advised that Sunderland had applied for extra funding from Department of Health money, the result of this application was to be determined in April 2007. The committee were informed that the Council's newly appointed Head of Housing had experience of developing extra care facilities and there was great optimism for the future of the development programme. The Committee were advised that discussion had taken place with the Sunderland Housing Group regarding the remodelling of existing sheltered houses into extra care schemes. Updates would be provided by way of further performance reporting on the Committee's Member Information Bulletin

Councillor Heron expressed immense disappointment that the 'Housing 21' bid was unsuccessful and felt perturbed that the future of Moore House was uncertain. The importance of helping older people maintain their independence by developing extra care schemes offering a range of high quality facilities for older people should not be neglected.

Councillor Wright commented on the information she had received about reduced hours as Sunderland moved to being a Commissioner rather than a Provider of Services and the effect this could have on extremely vulnerable people. She also wondered about choice and the impact on local people who wished to continue receiving services from council staff. Mr. King responded by reassuring the Committee that as commissioners of services, the Council must ensure local peoples' needs, entitlements and rights are at the centre of delivery and they will need to demonstrate that they are continually improving outcomes for individuals and local communities. The Duty of Care remains firmly with the local authority. The Tyne and Wear Care Alliance, for example, supports this commissioning and ensures Quality Assurance processes are robust.

In response to a question from Councillor Wright regarding a moratorium on direct payments, Mr. King advised that this was not the case. He confirmed that direct payments can be used for extra care provision and can be made in conjunction with the Independent Living Fund if an intense package of care exists.

Councillor Wilson asked how the defined time scale for a particular personal/support care activity had been established e.g. bathing, dressing. Mr. King agreed to find out this information.

The Chairman queried the input of the assessment team and was informed that the framework for setting eligibility criteria for adult social care is assessed against the Fair Access to Care (FACS) criteria. The framework is based on individuals' needs and associated risks to independence, and includes four eligibility bands - critical, substantial, moderate and low. Local authorities are not obliged to provide assessment and support for all four bands, however Sunderland is one of only 6% of Councils who do so.

The Chairman referred to the recent press reports regarding the 'Fit for the Future' programme at City Hospitals. It was reported 500 jobs might be lost in a bid to save £20 million over the next three years and he requested a report to be brought to the Committee when these changes had taken place. Ms. Maureen Dale, in Ms. Harris's absence, agreed to pass this request on and also advised that more patients were being looked after in the community, such as the new primary care centres.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Ina Murton, Service Improvement Manager, Adult Services be invited to attend a future meeting to report on effective Quality Assurance systems for Extra Care;
- (ii) Mr. Graham King to provide regular updates to the Committee via the Members Information Bulletin regarding the situation on Extra Care provision;
- (iii) Mr. King to ascertain the timescale guidelines for members of staff who carry out specific personal and social care tasks;

- (iv) City Hospitals bring an update report to the Committee once the outcome of the proposed job cuts of the “Fit for the Future 20.08” project is known; and
- (v) that the report be received and noted.

Family Adult and Community Learning

The Acting Head of Family, Adult and Community Learning submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an overview of provision and projects currently commissioned by the Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) Team, to illustrate some of the current challenges faced by FACL and to initiate further information sharing opportunities.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Maggie Smith, Project Officer in the FACL team gave a verbal presentation to Members and advised that all of the service’s learning opportunities were secured through contracting and commissioning. In order to target resources and ensure an adequate mix of provision, FACL had contracted for delivery with a range of statutory and voluntary organisations. Ms Smith also informed the Committee of funding allocation changes and some of the key challenges currently facing the FACL service.

Councillor Heron expressed concern that charging fees for certain courses could constitute a real barrier for learning to the very groups that these courses were aimed at engaging i.e. hard to reach or low income groups. Ms. Smith acknowledged that this would be a challenge and the effect of charging fees on potential learners would need to be monitored.

Councillor Maddison queried whether the course ‘Stargazing for Beginners’ related to Astrology or Astronomy. Ms. Smith agreed to determine this.

In response to a question from Councillor Wright regarding contracts to offer education opportunities to adults with learning disabilities, Ms. Smith acknowledged the importance of selecting the most appropriate contractor or partner to provide an agreed programme and the FACL would continually work to ensure access to a tailored curriculum for learners with disabilities or learning difficulties. This would include through direct payments. The programme also links with local Sure Start initiatives which assist in providing opportunities for parents and carers to engage in lifelong learning or employment and encourage family education to encompass the wide range of formal and informal learning.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Smith for the detailed report and informative presentation and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the programme of work for people with learning disabilities be provided to Councillor Norma Wright;
- (ii) it be agreed to undertake a visit to Bunny Hill to study in more detail, how the centre will act as a 'hub for Skills for Life/Skills for Work/Skills for Independent Living; and
- (ii) the report be received and noted.

Workforce Development in the Independent Care Sector

The Manager for the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview of the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance's (TWCA) present and future role in the enablement of adults through transformation of the supply of learning in the care sector.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman welcomed Moira Pinkney, Manager of the Service to the Committee. Ms. Pinkney provided Members with a verbal presentation raising awareness of the TWCA's unique partnership arrangements and the sharing of information and good practice.

Councillor Heron commented on the link between TWCA and the URBAN II programme which looked to improve the employment prospects of local people. Ms. Pinkney commented that the Sunderland Network Board of Employers was involved with URBAN II. Councillor Heron remarked that the work carried out in schools to raise the profile of social care as a career opportunity was very pleasing.

In response to a question from Councillor Wright regarding the need for compulsory training, Ms. Pinkney advised that there was a series of short mandatory courses that required completion (such as lifting and handling guidance) before a care job could be undertaken.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

NHS Pathways Pilot – North East Ambulance Service

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to approve Member attendance at an event being organised by North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Paul Staines, Review Co-ordinator introduced the report.

5. RESOLVED that Councillors N. Wright and Richardson look into their availability to attend the NEAS event on 23rd October and contact the Review Co-ordinator.

Reference from Cabinet : Proposed Arrangements for the Future Delivery of Adult Services

The City Solicitor submitted a report to set out, for information, a report to 11th October, 2006 Cabinet.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. BAINBRIDGE,
Chairman.