



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP

AGENDA ITEM: 3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP HELD ON FRIDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2001 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.05 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr T J Fowler (in the Chair)

Mrs P M Bacon, Mr J W Cartwright, Mrs E M Lay, Mr D J Rowlands

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr P Cochrane, Mr D C T Graves, Mr R Lingham-Wood, Mr C Jones and Mrs C S Willetts

IN ATTENDANCE

Hugh Carey – Cabinet Member for Care Services for Adults

Jackie Haynes – Chief Executive, Bucks Health Authority

Roger Edwards – Policy Support Officer

Clare Gray – Committee Administrator

DECLARTIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2001, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed subject to the following amendments:-

Minute 4: David Beckett, Bucks Health Authority

- 2nd bullet point – Mr Beckett reported that there were a number of overseas recruitment drives and that nurses were offered a reward payment for staying in post **throughout the winter period.**

- 6th bullet point - Members noted that discussions would be held in early February if there was a projected underspend. **This would only relate to non-recurrent winter money set aside for interim care placements. Mr Beckett suggested that the additional ‘promoting independence’ grant money could be used to support winter initiatives into the next financial year.**

2 DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS TO BE RAISED

Members discussed the questions that they wished to raise with the Cabinet Member for Care Services for Adults and the Chief Executive of the Health Authority. In general, members felt that if any visitor to the Select Committee could not answer a question, a written answer should be given to the Committee or the fact that the information was not available should be referred to in the final report.

3 JACKIE HAYNES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BUCKS HEALTH AUTHORITY (BHA)

Jackie Haynes, Chief Executive of Bucks Health Authority attended to present her view on winter pressures. The following points were raised:-

Purchasing Arrangements

- In relation to a question on the best purchasing arrangements, Jackie Haynes reported that the ideal form of purchasing was ‘spot purchasing’ to find the placement that would meet each individual’s requirements. However, this was not always possible or practical. She then referred to an example where ‘block purchasing’ was the best solution; 13 patients were being moved from Stoke Mandeville Hospital to a new nursing home run by Trinity Care. It was important to maintain the integrity of the group and the Health Authority had a contract with the home for a period of 5 years to ensure that they would be able to remain there on a permanent basis.

Prevention

- If there were no beds available in homes this would obviously lead to delayed discharge. However, it was important that the patient remained in hospital if they were unable to receive adequate support at home. The Health Authority were undertaking a number of initiatives to prevent older people entering hospital in the first place; once older people entered hospital this often resulted in a greater level of dependency. For example, GP’s in Wendover were successfully managing older people in the community to prevent them needing to enter hospital. The Health Authority was also working with ‘Elderly Persons Intermediate Care’ Scheme (EPIC). Prevention was the most effective way of using resources and providing a better quality of life.

Research

- Jackie Haynes agreed to provide information to the Committee on research undertaken by the Public Health Research Unit in Oxford and an evidence

based piece of work undertaken by Registrars on whether prevention improved quality of life and saved costs.

Partnerships

- Jackie Haynes expressed the importance of partnership working, particularly in two areas:-
 - reducing the inequalities of health by working with partners in the areas of transport, planning permission, local economy, housing and environment. It was important to work with other public sector organisations to provide an affordable environment to encourage people to live and work in Buckinghamshire. The main problems were:-
 - recruitment and retention of staff and national economic pressures;
 - the cost of land and property in Buckinghamshire which meant that there were fewer private providers of home/nursing home care in the local area
 - improving the delivery of services. There was a good working relationship at senior level and with frontline staff. The main pressures were usually felt by middle management who had to reconcile the needs of the clients and the resources available. Strategies needed to be developed in the joint provision/commissioning of services and it was noted that in particular a Joint Commissioning Board was being set up for Learning Disabilities which would be in place by the Autumn.
- It was important to develop good working relationships with the voluntary sector. However, this was often difficult because the voluntary sector often acted as the provider of services and therefore they could not act as an advocate.
- It was also important to involve the public in decision making. Jackie Haynes gave an example of using 'Citizen's Juries'. A Citizen's Jury had been set up by the Health Authority in relation to 'Managing Back Pain' which had been very successful but had been resource intensive.

Allocation of Resources/Planning

- The Chairman referred to the comment made by 'BACH' that it would have been useful for them to be involved in planning for winter pressures. Jackie Haynes reported that resources had been allocated by Government at very short notice and arrangements had to be made quickly to submit a 'Winter Plan' which had meant there had been no time to consult other organisations. Resources had also been allocated in an ad-hoc way throughout the year which had made it difficult to plan. It would be useful if the Government could allocate one pot of resources at the beginning of the year.

4 HUGH CAREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CARE SERVICES FOR ADULTS

Hugh Carey, Cabinet Member for Care Services for Adults attended to present his views on winter pressures. The following points were noted:-

Partnership Arrangements

- The Council had a good working relationship with the Health Authority. An example of this was the setting up of the new Mental Health Trust from 1 April 2001. Further work was being undertaken on joint commissioning with health and this would ensure that the County Council was at the centre of the decision making process. Regular meetings were being set up with the Health Authority, including meetings between the Chief Executive of the Health Authority and the Cabinet Member to ensure joint aims were being achieved.
- It was noted that there had been 34 meetings between Health and Social Services regarding winter pressures. This had meant a large strain on resources and it was intended that the process would be streamlined next year. It was hoped that the Government would allocate one pot of money at the beginning of the financial year to aid better planning.
- The Committee noted that pressures existed throughout the year, not just during winter. The holiday period was particularly difficult because of staff shortages.

Monitoring Arrangements

- Hugh Carey reported that monitoring was undertaken through a regular meeting with the Assistant Directors, himself and the General Manager. He informed Members that his Policy Advisory Group was currently looking at Joint Investment Plans and were reviewing spending pressures. He felt that it was important that the relevant Select Committee also undertook monitoring.

Residential Care Homes

- The Chairman referred to the meeting with the Buckinghamshire Association of Care Homes (BACH) and their concerns about not being included in planning for the winter period. Hugh Carey reported that a high level meeting had been set up with BACH including himself, the General Manager and the Assistant Director to resolve this issue and to build on the partnership. It was noted however, that as BACH was a professional organisation representing the interests of residential and nursing homes, there would obviously be some pressure in negotiating prices for the purchase of beds. It was important to discuss with BACH, the spending pressures that Social Services were facing particularly in relation to the low Standard Spending Assessment. In addition it had to be borne in mind that unit costs for nursing home and residential care in Bucks were high even when compared with other high cost areas such as Kent and Surrey.

- Concern was expressed about the fact that it was becoming considerably difficult for homes to make a profit. On the other hand the Social Services budget was under considerable pressure. However, it was important to develop the partnership with BACH to identify new programmes and policies for intermediate care and rehabilitation. There was also concern about the fact that the demand for beds was rising because of the increasing number of older people but the number of beds available were decreasing.
- It was noted that the fact that South Bucks NHS Trust block purchased beds throughout the winter period and paid a higher price for the beds caused problems for the Social Services Department for the rest of the year.
- Hugh Carey reported that the Social Services Department was trying to obtain up-to-date information on future statistics in relation to home care and was employing the assistance of Lang and Buisson, a consultancy organisation to plot future trends. The research would look into:-
 - defining the needs of the Council for residential placements;
 - obtaining a view of how the market would operate in the future;
 - obtaining information on to what extent the Council would need to intervene in the market.

A commissioning strategy would then be developed in consultation with BACH, Fremantle and other relevant partners.

The Client's Needs

- Hugh Carey reported that Social Services offered the client as much choice as possible. This became increasingly difficult if the service they required needed to be more specialised, for example, if the client suffered from dementia. The assessment process was also discussed with the carer and the client of the family.

Cost of care

- Members were informed of the difficulties of discharging some clients from hospital because they were reluctant to pay for the cost of home care. Home care charges were high in Buckinghamshire because of the low Standard Spending Assessment allocated by Government. However, few clients were charged the full cost for the service. Charges were assessed using eligibility criteria. Hugh Carey reported that a Government Paper had just been circulated on the Policy for Charging and this would be reported back to the Committee once the implications of the paper had been analysed by the General Manager.
- It was important for each budget manager to manage their cash limit. However, where a budget was overspent, additional funds would be required from another budget within the Department.

- Members noted that home care services had been accredited with ISO 2002 and were inspected annually. They had also produced an efficiency manual which governed home care. The General Manager reported that new management structures were being put in place to build in the capacity to review the efficiency of home care services and to monitor whether they were in the interests of the client. Members were informed that 50% of home care was provided by Social Services and 50% was provided by the independent sector.
- Hugh Carey reported that the winter pressure funding had a large financial impact on the Council as clients were pushed through the system at a quicker pace and no funding had been allocated for the second year.
- Members noted the complexity of the assessment process and the number of people involved in making the assessment. Following assessment it could also be difficult to understand whether health or social services should be responsible for funding the placement. This relied on good working relationships between the two organisations. It was acknowledged that funding was a gray area between health and social services and was the subject of continued debate. For example, winter pressures funding would go to the NHS but residential and nursing care spending was a County Council responsibility. There were other anomalies, for example, a client could obtain a 'social services bath' for free whereas a 'health bath' had to be paid for.
- The General Manager was asked to find out some further information on the residential support grant, in particular whether this was taken into account within the Standard Spending Assessment.

Recruitment pressures

- Members expressed concern about the recruitment pressures with home care staff. The Cabinet had recommended to Council that some funding for next year should be allocated to imaginative recruitment schemes. Hugh Carey reported that home carers were recruited at employment fairs in the County, although concern was expressed that the Council had not been represented at the Aylesbury job fair. So, more needed to be done corporately as well as within the portfolio area. The Vice-Chairman reported that it was important to advertise in villages to target potential employees who did not have transport in the village and required work.

Further work

- Health and Social Services were currently working jointly on the implications of the NHS Plan and Joint Investment Plans which were currently using a large amount of management resources but were a fundamental part of partnership working.
- The NHS Plan was being discussed at the Cabinet Meeting on 5 March 2001 and the implications this would have for the Council. Hugh Carey was taking the lead on the partnership with the health service.

5 ACTION PLANNING

No information was discussed under this item.

6 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

23 February 2001

1 March 2001

**MR T J FOWLER
CHAIRMAN**

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