



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

### *SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP*

AGENDA ITEM: 3a

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP HELD ON FRIDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2001 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.40 PM**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr T J Fowler (in the Chair)  
Mr J W Cartwright (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs P M Bacon, Mr C Jones, Mrs E M Lay and Mrs C S Willetts

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Mr P Cochrane, Mr D C T Graves, Mr R Lingham-Wood, and Mr D J Rowlands

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Shaun Brogan - Chief Executive Ridgeway PCG  
Mary Bolton - County Intermediate Care Co-ordinator  
Gerry Batchelor - Head of Select Committee Support  
Roger Edwards - Policy Support Officer  
Julie Berton - Committee Administrator

#### **DECLARTIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no pecuniary, non-pecuniary, personal or private interests declared.

#### **1 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 February 2001, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed.

#### **2 DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS TO BE RAISED**

Members discussed the questions that they wished to raise with the Chief Executive of Ridgeway Primary Care Group and the County Intermediate Care Co-ordinator.

The Chairman reported that a Group from the Committee had visited South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust in Wycombe on 19 February 2001, this had been very helpful and informative. The visit started with a brief discussion with the Director of Hospital Services and the General Manager on the relationship with Social Services, staffing issues and the initiatives to alleviate the problems. These initiatives included a trip to the Philippines to recruit staff and partnership ventures with the housing association.

The Group then visited several departments. Firstly Accident and Emergency, it was reported that the department had been modernised but was still under extreme pressure. The Committee noted the difficulties with the flow of patients through the department, particularly in relation to access to Social Workers at certain times during the day. In many instances patients have to be admitted rather than being moved onto more appropriate care ie being discharged into intermediate care. The Group then moved onto the new Intensive Care Unit, which comprised 9 beds each requiring 7 members of staff.

A new Medical Assessment Unit has been established to assist in clearing the backlog of patients in Accident and Emergency. Any referrals from General Practitioners (GP's) are now diverted to this unit, which contains 32 beds. The hospital would like to see this number increase as they are already working to capacity in this unit. Discharges are delayed if the patient has arrived on the ward in the afternoon, as often no social worker is available to undertake an assessment. Patients may also remain on the ward as the basic nursing skills they require are not available outside the hospital.

During lunch the Group met with Senior Managers and discussed the relationship with Social Services which included levels of service and assessment meetings. The hospital felt that a more flexible approach to work patterns was required to enable Social Workers to assist in clearing the backlog of patients. Co-operation between staff was felt to be good, but there appeared to be a lack of understanding of the issues/problems faced.

### **3     SHAUN BROGAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, RIDGEWAY PRIMARY CARE GROUP (PCG)**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Shaun Brogan to the Committee and outlined the Committees aspirations for open and meaningful discussion.

Initial discussion centred on the structure of the PCG and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) being established from 1 April 2001. Mr Brogan confirmed that although the new PCT was the merging of the Ridgeway PCG, Aylesbury Vale PCG and Aylesbury Vale Community Trust there would be no more money available for expansion.

Ridgeway PCG currently works in partnership with Social Services and the Health Services, although working relationships are satisfactory, they could be better. Two areas of particular difficulty highlighted were Joint Commissioning for mental health and learning disability services. Little progress had been made, on the development of this, however a meeting had

been scheduled for week commencing 5 March 2001 to take this forward. The second area of difficulty related to an “attached Social Worker project”, this is an initiative where GP’s surgeries have an allocated Social Worker attached to their practice. This speeds up the process of assessment and practices are keen to develop this. A surgery in Princes Risborough has an attached social worker and this has proved to be an extremely successful initiative. The PCG had spoken to Social Services regarding this initiative and development, however concerns had been raised at the cost implications.

The Committee discussed resourcing issues in terms of financial difficulties, particularly as more and more resources are hypothecated to specific element of the NHS Plan. This means that finding money for basic services is increasingly onerous. Alongside recruitment concerns, an ageing population, technological advances and raised expectations, both health and social services are working in a “stretched” environment.

It was reported that although there had been fewer problems in 2000/01 Winter Planning it was felt that focus should not just be on a “winter” only, but on emergency admissions all year round.

The Committee thanked Shaun Brogan for a helpful and informative contribution.

The Committee adjourned at 11.25 am and reconvened at 11.35 am.

#### **4 MARY BURTON, COUNTY INTERMEDIATE CARE CO-ORDINATOR**

The Committee welcomed Ms Mary Burton and outlined their aspirations for an open and meaningful discussion.

Mary Burton confirmed that Intermediate Care was designed to maximise independence by reducing avoidable hospital admissions, facilitating timely discharge, promoting effective rehabilitation and recovery and minimising premature and avoidable admission to long term institutional care.

The service currently liaises with Stoke Mandeville Hospital on a weekly basis to discuss patients discharge from surgical wards, which is working well. However difficulties are experienced in Accident and Emergency with social workers availability being limited from 9.00 am - 5.30 pm. It was confirmed that a part-time Care Manager was to be appointed to Accident and Emergency, also recruitment was planned to appoint a nurse to enable the service to be run until 7.00 pm. Other initiatives planned included the combining of assessments, having one instead of several, which should provide a more integrated approach.

Discussion also centred on the support provided once the assessment had been completed, such as installation of handrails, meals-on-wheels and dial-a-shopper. Members queried whether this caused problems with which agency was responsible for what. It was confirmed that there are some overlaps and anomalies but these are worked through.

Members queried where the shortages/difficulties were in staffing and recruitment. It was confirmed that Occupational Therapists are in short supply, this is a national trend. Recruitment for Team Assistants is easier as they are not trained nurses, and therefore people who have worked within a care environment are employed, such as individuals who have worked in residential care or those with home care experience.

To enable Intermediate Care to assist difficulties faced by hospitals, a relationship of mutual trust must be built.

The Committee thanked Mary Burton for an informative and helpful discussion.

## **5 ACTION PLAN**

It was agreed that a draft of the Committee report on Winter Pressures would be brought to the next meeting for comment.

After discussion on the next issue for consideration, it was felt by members that the Winter Pressures work should be completed before looking at a new subject, bearing in mind the timescales for completion of work.

The Chairman suggested that preliminary work on the Voluntary Sector should be undertaken to lead to the next strand of work.

## **6 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Thursday 1 March 2001

**MR T J FOWLER  
CHAIRMAN**

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