



# Minutes

## **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEETING**

### AGENDA ITEM: 2

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2005, COMMENCING AT 12PM AND CONCLUDING AT 2PM IN CONFERENCE ROOM, HAMPDEN HALL, AYLESBURY**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bob Sherwood	BCC Head of Commissioning, Policy & Performance (Chairman)
Belinda Ford	Principal Officer (Policy, Research & Needs) Wycombe District Council
Sheila Franklin	Head of Housing (Needs & Strategy), Aylesbury Vale District Council
Martin Holt	Head of Health and Housing, Chiltern District Council
Sean Hughes	Housing Strategy Manager, South Bucks District Council
Anne McLoughlin-Flynn	BCC Partnership Commissioning Manager
Jane Smith	BCC Finance
Paul Williams	Housing Needs & Partnership Manager, National Probation Service, Thames Valley
Katherine Woolley	Planning Manager, Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Trust

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Kirsteen Murray	BCC Interim Supporting People Manager
Kelly Sutherland	BCC Democratic Services Officer

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

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2005, copies of which had been circulated previously, were confirmed.

## 2 MATTERS ARISING

### *Update on new Governance Arrangements*

It was noted that the Terms of Reference for each of the new groups had been finalised. The Supporting People team were organising Service User, Advocacy and service-user group and Provider representation for the Core Strategy Group and Bob Sherwood would shortly be writing to the Chief Executives of the PCTs and District Councils to formally invite their nominations for representatives for both the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body. The new framework would be implemented in November/December 2005, therefore this would effectively be the last meeting of the Commissioning Body in its current format.

BS

Katherine Woolley informed the Commissioning Body that it was likely that the 3 PCTs in Buckinghamshire would be merging to form one PCT for the whole county, excluding Milton Keynes. This change would be borne in mind when approaching the PCTs for representatives.

## 3 FINANCE REPORT

Jane Smith, BCC Finance, tabled a report detailing the end of 2004/05 financial year position for the Supporting People programme, which would be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

It was noted that there had been an underspend, which was in part due to some funding being ringfenced to develop future projects. This underspend would be used to offset the cut in grant for 2005/06. Concerns were expressed that if an underspend was reported to the ODPM then this might result in a further cut in the grant for 2006/07. Jane Smith commented that reporting these figures was a requirement of the grant conditions and assured the Commissioning Body that she did not anticipate the information being used in this way. Kirsteen Murray, Interim SP Manager asserted that the SP grant distribution formula was supposed to be based on need, not on the basis of current service provision. A member asked if the SP grant would continue to be ringfenced in 2006/07 and it was noted that there had been no definite indication that ringfencing would be removed in the near future.

## 4 RISK LOG UPDATE

The Commissioning Body noted the updated risk log.

## 5 BASE BUDGET REVIEW

Kirsteen Murray presented a report on the current Supporting People base budget. The following points were noted:

- The Commissioning Body's decisions to ringfence funding for future developments had had a major impact in terms of increasing the base budget.
- Buckinghamshire's SP services were currently subsidised by self-paying clients. An overspend was already likely in 2005/06 and this could increase significantly if the number of self-funding clients reduced for any reason, for example, due to a change in benefit arrangements or a reconfiguration of service provision. This presented a difficult situation as ideally many older clients should be removed from SP services as they were not meeting the SP eligibility criteria. However this would lead to a greater shortfall in funding.
- Under the Matrix allocation formula it was unlikely that

Buckinghamshire would face a further cut in grant for 2006/07. It was hoped that the grant would remain unchanged or slightly increase. If the grant increased by 5% and the current number of self-payers were retained then SP could possibly break even. However, in any other scenario, Buckinghamshire would face a shortfall in funding in 2006/07 that would not be underwritten by the County Council.

- It was proposed by KM that the base budget be closely monitored from the start of the next financial year and reported to each meeting of CB. It was AGREED that the Base Budget should be regularly reviewed from the beginning of the next financial year.

**SP  
Team/Finance**

## **6 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Kirsten Murray introduced a proposal for future Eligibility Criteria. It was reported that all providers would be served notice on their interim contracts this month, with a view to steady state contracts being introduced by the end of March 2006. Prior to this deadline, eligibility criteria had to be established in order to facilitate the negotiation of contract terms.

The Commissioning Body considered proposals for low, medium and high support levels. 12 hours maximum had been suggested for high and at present only one learning disability service was in excess of this amount. It was agreed that support in excess of 12 hours would be exceptional. Once the criteria for low, medium and high were agreed, then an hourly rate would have to be attached for each client group. The Commissioning Manager would then negotiate with providers on this basis.

There was a discussion centring on the suggestion of Jane Everton of the ODPM to group clients into broader categories, which would link in well with the Buckinghamshire Supporting People Strategy. It was suggested that eligibility criteria should be devised along these lines, as having three wider client groups would also allow more flexibility for moving money. Whilst there was support for this suggestion from members, there was concern that the ODPM might not ultimately adopt this approach and then contract negotiators would be severely undermined.

It was AGREED that the Eligibility Criteria proposed should be accepted, subject to members being allowed a period of 2 weeks to comment on any changes to wording. There was a request for HIA's to be added to the eligibility criteria. The Supporting People team should then begin the work of applying the Eligibility Criteria using the existing client groups, but bearing in mind the possibility that 3 broader categories could be introduced by ODPM in the future.

**KM / SP  
team**

It was AGREED that urgent representations would be made to ODPM to lobby for an increase in grant, as it was recognised that responding to the inspection and maintaining current services would be extremely difficult given the current level of funding.

**BS/KM**

## **7 FUTURE JOB ROLES IN THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE FUNCTION**

The Commissioning Body considered a report recommending core posts for the Supporting People function in Buckinghamshire from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006, located within the Commissioning structure of the Administering Authority. It was recognised that the Supporting People team needed stability, as a number of posts were currently temporary and the team were being led by an Interim Manager.

It was also noted that there was a degree of uncertainty regarding the continuation of the administration grant, which currently covered the staffing costs of the Supporting People team. It was suggested that if the administration grant was withdrawn in 2006/07 then BCC would approach all partners for a contribution to the staffing costs of the programme. This could potentially be £45-50,000 for each partner.

It was AGREED that members would raise this possibility within their own organisations, as a decision on the future of the administration grant was not expected until the end of November or December 2005.

All reps

It was noted that the Commissioning and Contracts Officer could be responsible for approximately 50 contracts and members expressed concern about this workload. The recommended posts were AGREED and it was noted that some Review Officer funding could be made available to support the Commissioning and Contracts Officer. Regionalisation of some contract negotiation work might be a possibility in future, which would also relieve the burden for this post holder.

KM / BS

## 8 SUPPORTING PEOPLE REVISED WORK PROGRAMME

The Commissioning Body received and noted the updated version of the Supporting People Work Programme.

## 9 OUTCOME OF MYSTERY SHOPPER EXERCISE

Members expressed disappointment at the outcome of the repeated Mystery Shopper exercise since there was still a relatively low level of awareness of Supporting People amongst front-line staff, but commented that it was very unlikely that a member of the public would specifically enquire about Supporting People services.

It was AGREED that representatives would report the findings back to their organisations and endeavour to introduce some training for front-line reception staff.

All reps

## 10 PROVIDER ACCREDITATION UPDATE

The Commissioning Body received and noted a report on the updated situation with regard to Provider Accreditation. It was reported that a number of providers had not completed the required forms and it was felt that in some cases this reflected the very low level of grant they received.

## 11 ELECTED MEMBER ADVISORY GROUP

The Commissioning Body considered and discussed a report detailing possible new terms of reference for the Elected Members Advisory Group. These had been revised in light of the overall changes to the governance arrangements for Supporting People in Buckinghamshire. It was suggested that a Non-Executive member of both the PCT Board and the Probation Service Board might also be included in the membership.

It was agreed that now the Supporting People Strategy had been produced and agreed, elected members should be kept informed on a more informal basis and if strategic issues arose which required consultation with members, then a meeting could be called on an ad hoc basis. It was AGREED that this suggestion would be taken forward by Bob Sherwood, who would consult with Mike Colston, BCC Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

BS

**12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Kirsteen Murray reported that meetings of the new groups had been arranged as follows:

Thursday 10 November 2005 at 2pm – Commissioning Body

Thursday 17 November 2005 at 10am – Advisory Forum

Thursday 1 December 2005 at 9am – Core Strategy Group

Members joined Bob Sherwood in expressing thanks to Anne McLoughlin-Flynn, who was leaving BCC, for all her hard work, particularly in the areas of partnership working and Supporting People.

Bob Sherwood also thanked all members for their contributions, as this was the last meeting of the Commissioning Body with its current membership. Members in turn thanked Bob Sherwood for chairing the meeting.

**13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 10 November 2005 at 2pm in the Conference Room, Hampden Hall, Aylesbury

**Chairman**