



Unconfirmed Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEETING

AGENDA ITEM: 2

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2005, COMMENCING AT 2.14PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.08PM IN CONFERENCE ROOM, HAMPDEN HALL, AYLESBURY

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Sherwood	BCC Head of Commissioning, Policy & Performance (Representing Chairman – Trevor Boyd).
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
Alan Savery	Interim Head of Housing Services, Wycombe District Council
Paul Williams	Housing Needs & Partnership Manager, National Probation Service, Thames Valley

IN ATTENDANCE

Kirsteen Murray	BCC Interim Supporting People Manager
Jane Smith	BCC Finance
Kelly Sutherland	BCC Democratic Services Officer
James Wilson	BCC Finance

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Alan Savery joined Commissioning Body as the new representative of Wycombe District Council. Trevor Boyd joined the CB as Chairman, but was represented at the meeting by Bob Sherwood.

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2005, copies of which had been circulated previously, were confirmed.

2 MATTERS ARISING

Bob Sherwood reported that the written submission to the ODPM to lobby for an increase in grant had not yet been sent but would be shortly. He also advised members that the issue of PCT representation remained outstanding. The PCTs would be contacted shortly with a view to a PCT representative joining the Commissioning Body from the next meeting. Members also noted that from January 2006 the Commissioning Body would be chaired by Rita Lally, who would be returning to the post of BCC's Strategic Director for Adult Social Care. Bob Sherwood would remain on the Commissioning Body and would also chair the Core Strategy Group.

BS

There was a discussion around the possible withdrawal of the administrative grant for Supporting People. District Council representatives advised that the possible request for £50,000 from each of them to support the administration of the programme had not been well received. Bob Sherwood gave an assurance that as soon as BCC received notification of the formula funding and any changes to the administrative grant they would advise all Commissioning Body members.

BS/KM

Bob Sherwood reported that further to the discussion at the last meeting regarding the Elected Member Advisory Group, he had prepared a paper outlining options for member involvement, which would recommend holding meetings on a more ad hoc basis, as issues arose which needed member consultation. This paper would initially be circulated to BCC members in the next few weeks.

BS

Kirsteen Murray advised that provider elections for the Core Strategy Group (CSG) were being held by a postal ballot, which was due to close shortly. At the Advisory Forum on 24th November, representatives from service users and advocacy groups would be sought.

FINANCE REPORT

Jane Smith, BCC Finance, tabled a Budget Monitoring Report, which highlighted pressures on the administration grant, which might not continue to be available for the next financial year.

With regard to the programme grant, the information presented was split into gross schemes and subsidy schemes. It was not anticipated that there would be any slippage on gross schemes this year. In relation to subsidy schemes there was an underspend of £185,725 which was as yet unallocated. An underspend of £205,000 was forecast, which would be allocated to previously agreed commitments.

4 RISK LOG UPDATE

The Commissioning Body noted the updated risk log. It was acknowledged that the risk associated with Supporting People was generally high due to a lack of clear direction from the ODPM and the issue of providers withdrawing from the market. Internal risks such as staffing issues and IT had largely been resolved.

A member asked if there was risk associated with increased publicity for

Supporting People following the recent inspection and with the introduction of BCC's Customer First programme. In response Kirsteen Murray explained that Supporting People did not qualify for the Customer First criteria and the BCC Supporting People team was too small to be able to mitigate the risk of higher call volumes.

5 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Kirsteen Murray reported that most of the recommendations resulting from the Audit Commission's inspection had now been implemented. The Commissioning Body commended the Supporting People team for completing so many actions on the work programme.

There was a discussion around cross-authority working. Kirsteen Murray reported that the Thames Valley Supporting People group had regular discussions and had recently had success in gaining agreement from ACTVaR to commission research into the needs of gypsies and travellers. The group also exchanged information on pricing. Although there was a willingness to share information on a regional basis, unless there was a directive to work more at a regional level, it was unlikely that regional contracting would develop.

Sean Hughes asked for advice from Commissioning Body members as he had recently had issues with Slough refusing to support South Bucks residents. He was advised to take issue with Slough on this, as ODPM did not view local eligibility restrictions favourably. Members felt that cross-authority movement would become a big issue in the future. With the new proposed Aylesbury lodge development it was planned to give priority to local residents, without totally excluding people from outside of Buckinghamshire.

6 LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Audit Commission had recommended that local performance indicators should be developed. In view of the fact that ODPM would shortly be proposing new performance indicators for the National Supporting People programme, the Commissioning Body AGREED that the development of local performance indicators should be delayed until the new national indicators were published.

7 SOCIALLY EXCLUDED SERVICE-USER NEEDS ANALYSIS

The Commissioning Body considered a needs analysis for socially excluded service users. At the next meeting members would be asked to consider recommendations for the whole of this group, with regards to which services should be put in place in Buckinghamshire from November 2006, when the interim contract phase would end.

Members raised an issue regarding some inaccuracies in the report. Kirsteen Murray thanked members for highlighting inaccuracies and it was AGREED that any information around inaccuracies or further useful data which might inform the needs analysis would be emailed to Helen Wayland, who had written the report.

It was noted that some services were SP eligible but were not currently SP funded, which meant that the team were aware of quality services which were not currently within the SP programme, but may bid for funding in the future.

All
members

8 PROPOSALS FOR SP FUNDING

The Commissioning Body considered three separate proposals for SP funding.

Gypsy and Traveller Service

The Supporting People team recommended funding be approved for the period of 1 January 2006 to 31 October 2006, as there was evidence of high support needs within this client group and Buckinghamshire currently lacked any provision to address this, a fact highlighted in the recent Audit Commission Inspection. The ACTVaR research would be completed within this timeframe, which would enable a regional strategy to be developed for this client group before ongoing SP services were commissioned. The Commissioning Body AGREED to provide the funding at the level recommended in the paper.

It was noted that a review of the service would be conducted in late February 2006. As a gypsy and traveller service had not been commissioned before there were no accredited providers, so the review had been timetabled in with a view to the provider reaching the minimum standards for accreditation.

A member asked how the outcomes of the service would be measured and Kirsteen Murray advised that OPDM guidelines already set out the criteria for SP KPIs and the ACTVaR research would inform needs analysis. It was also noted that other external funding could be accessed for this particular client group, which could be investigated by the provider.

Wycombe Private Sector Rent Deposit Pilot Scheme

The Supporting People team recommended funding be approved for the period of 1 January 2006 to 31 October 2006, as the proposed service was strategically relevant, represented good value for money and was supported by Wycombe District Council and the DAT. The provider involved had a strong track record and a similar scheme, which had recently been established in Oxfordshire, was doing well.

The Commissioning Body AGREED to provide the funding, on the basis that it was initially for the period of time outlined above and it was important that the provider was clear about this being an interim arrangement. Members suggested that a more strategic approach was needed, as limited funding in Buckinghamshire meant that projects which were funded initially, might not be able to rely on ongoing support. However on a positive note, a member drew the Commissioning Body's attention to a recent ODPM/Home Office letter, which highlighted that the DAT may be given more flexibility with its funding arrangements.

Aylesbury New Lodge

The Commissioning Body were advised that a full proposal for funding for Aylesbury New Lodge re-provision would be presented at the next meeting. The proposal was likely to meet the strategic needs of a wide variety of client groups. Members were reminded that funding for the Aylesbury Hostel re-provision by an RSL had been ring-fenced and the Commissioning Body would have to decide if funding could be made available for both projects. The representative for Aylesbury Vale District Council commented that from her point of view both schemes were necessary, as the New Lodge re-provision would help AVDC meet their statutory homelessness duty, whilst the Hostel project would offer accommodation to clients with substance misuse problems.

9 CONTRACT PRICING MATRIX

Kirsteen Murray introduced a Contract Pricing Matrix and invited comments from the Commissioning Body. It was noted that the definitions of Low, Medium and High support had been agreed at the last Commissioning Body meeting and now a maximum unit price had been attached. Members were advised that this was the fully inclusive unit price. The unit price level had also been influenced by the Voluntary Sector Compact which BCC and all four District Councils had signed up to and prices had been directly benchmarked with Oxfordshire, who used a number of the same providers.

It was hoped that publication of the Pricing Matrix would reassure providers that a fair price would be paid for their services. The unit price quoted was the upper limit and although it was recognised that providers would be looking to receive that figure, it would be up to the Contract Officers to negotiate firmly.

The Pricing Matrix was welcomed as it provided a clear framework and would give providers more confidence. The Commissioning Body APPROVED the Contract Pricing Matrix, with the addition of 'inclusive unit cost' in the final column heading to make this explicit and clear.

The unit costs outlined in the matrix would inform Commissioning Body decisions on the Commissioning Strategy for each of the three client groups in 2006.

10 SUMMARY OF DEFAULT NOTICES SERVED

Kirsteen Murray reported that there had been ongoing issues with providers not returning information to the Supporting People team, which had led to incomplete returns being submitted to OPDM. In line with the process previously agreed by Commissioning Body, default notices had now been served on a number of providers.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Supporting People Team Staffing Structure

The Commissioning Body were advised that a Contracts Officer had been recruited who would commence employment in December 2005. Unfortunately a Supporting People Commissioning Manager had not been recruited, but the role had now been regraded and would be readvertised very shortly with a view to appointing someone to start in February 2006. Bob Sherwood was in discussion with the interim Supporting People Manager with a view to her staying on until the end of January 2006.

Since the last meeting of the Commissioning Body it had been decided that the minimum staffing structure that had been discussed was too limited and that a second Contracts Officer should be recruited, as the Commissioning Body had intimated. The Commissioning Body AGREED that a second Contracts Officer should be recruited, as it was recognised that there would be too much work for one person in negotiating steady state contracts in 2006.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

After the meeting the date of the next meeting was rescheduled to:

Wednesday 26 January 2005 at 9.30am in Room 100, Second Floor, Old
County Offices, County Hall, Aylesbury

Chairman