

## **SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2000, IN THE IRELAND ROOM, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.55 PM

### **PRESENT**

Mr R J Worrall in the Chair

Mr B G Allen, Mrs C M Aston, Mrs M A M Aston, Mrs P M Bacon, Mr R H StG Carey, Mrs P M Crawford, Mr T J Fowler, Mr D A T Graves, Mr C Jones, Mr R C Pushman, Mrs F D Roberts MBE JP, K I Ross, Mrs M Thackray and Julia D Wassell

### **APOLOGIES/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

The Head of Administration reported that apologies had been received from Mr J W Cartwright, Mrs S D Hodgkinson, Mr M Greenburgh, Mr S Kennell, Mr K F Morgan JP and Mr D J Rowlands.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were received:-

Mrs M A M Aston who is a member of the Abbeyfield Society  
Mr R C Pushman who has a relative receiving care services and as a member of Buckinghamshire Community Action  
Mrs F D Roberts who is president of MENCAP  
Mr K I Ross who has a relative receiving care services  
Mr M Thackray who is a member of Buckinghamshire Community Action, Locality Forum, the Alzheimer's Society and the Aylesbury Vale Health Care Trust  
Mr R J Worrall who is Chairman of East Berkshire NHS Trust and Chairman of the Leonard Cheshire Thames Valley (Care at Home) Services.

### **THE NHS PLAN**

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to hear a presentation on the NHS Plan from the Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Health Authority and the Director of Social Services.

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Jackie Haynes, Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire Health Authority to the meeting.

Introducing the presentation, the Chief Executive explained that a major consultation

exercise had been carried out on the proposals, which sought to radically change the NHS. Six action teams had been set up covering: partnership, prevention, professions, performance, patient access and patient empowerment. Ten core principles underpinned the plan, with the vision of a Health Service designed around the patient.

Two important issues, which impacted on both the local authority and the Health Authority were emphasised:

- i) The scrutiny role of the Local Authority over decisions taken by the Health Authority. The authorities would need to work together to ensure priorities were fair and transparent and to share understanding ; and
- ii) The establishment of the Primary Care Trusts.

During the discussion a number of issues emerged including:

### **Funding/Budgets**

- A member commented that the perception of funding in the NHS was that a disproportionate amount was spent on management. The Committee noted that although more funding was now available, the difficulty was distributing it to the right services. In the past the service had been working at well below budget.
- The spending per head in Buckinghamshire is 2% below the national average even allowing for adjustments in the national formula.
- There is a strong bias for funding to the north of the country with a difficulty for the government to balance/bring Buckinghamshire up to their fair share.
- An increasing population in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale also require their share of the capitation.
- There is not as much funding as is required.
- High costs of medicine and procedures impacting upon the budget

### **Recruitment/Retention**

- There is a shortage of all medical staff.
- The current vacancy rate in the NHS is 5-6% in Milton Keynes and 18% in the south of the county.
- Need to recruit and retain “local” people.
- Looking to adopt powerful nurse leadership.

- Salaries – real issue in south-east for the whole of the public services.

## **Housing**

- High costs of housing in Buckinghamshire
- It was noted that the Health Authority was attempting to negotiate with a Housing Association in south Buckinghamshire to provide additional residential accommodation for nursing staff.
- Housing in particular is an issue for all parties. There is a need to take a broader picture, for example, working with the District Councils on affordable housing policies.

The Director of Social Services commented that there was a clear presumption within the Plan that there would be a working partnership between local authorities and health authorities. This would be a challenge for both authorities to achieve the integration of services.

In response to a question over examples of the authorities working closer together, the Director of Social Services highlighted the Mental Health and Learning Disability services being brought together into single organisations. Also, a critical element would be how the authorities pooled resources to achieve greater effect. A member asked how assessments for older people would be made and noted that this would be covered by one single exercise which would improve the current situation .

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for her interesting and honest presentation and emphasised the main theme of the NHS Plan, partnership working, stating that the people of Buckinghamshire would come first above other internal considerations.

Following the presentation the Chairman reconvened the meeting.

## **1 MINUTES**

The minutes and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2000 were confirmed.

## **2 THE NHS PLAN**

The Committee received and noted a report from the Director of Social Services which outlined the proposals of the government's NHS plan, including the implications for social care. The Committee noted that the plan involved an extensive programme of investment in health services over the coming years. The Council would need to plan and respond to the individual changes as they were detailed and implemented. It was reported that the proposals would have a major impact on the way in which health and social care was organised and in particular the Council would need to consider how it

programmed arrangements for the integration of services. The financial implications for local government, including Buckinghamshire, were reported to be unclear and work was continuing to assess the consequences.

Members welcomed the plan and noted, during discussion, that one of the changes outlined involved the abolition of the Community Health Councils.

### **3 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PARTNERSHIP FORUM**

The Committee received reports from the meetings of the Buckinghamshire Partnership Forum held on 19 July 2000 and 19 September 2000.

Members' attention was drawn to the resignation of Chris Barnes both as Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Health Authority and as Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Partnership Forum.

### **4 POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE PANEL**

The Committee received reports from the meetings of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 25 July 2000 and 20 September 2000.

### **5 FUTURE OF RESOURCE CENTRES FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Members' attention was drawn to the following recommendation from the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 25 July 2000.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Directors of Social Services and Corporate Services finalise the details of the contract with Heritage Care and English Churches Housing Group in consultation with the Chairman of Social Services Committee and the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.**

### **6 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR**

Members' attention was drawn to the following recommendations from the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 25 July 2000.

#### **RESOLVED**

**1 That the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Panel, compile and circulate a list of "significant" targets to members of the Panel, prior to the next meeting at which they would be reported for agreement;**

**2 That the proposals for aligning the publication of the information digest with**

**the monitoring arrangements for the Local Performance Plan be endorsed;**

- 3 That further consideration be given to the proposed response to the External Auditors Statutory Report on the LPP indicators, BVPI 52 (cost of intensive social care for adults) and BVPI 51 (cost of services for children looked after) in the light of comments received during the meeting.**

**7 INFORMATION DIGEST AND LOCAL PERFORMANCE PLAN INDICATORS**

Members' attention was drawn to the following recommendations from the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 20 September 2000.

**RESOLVED**

**That the performance indicators, service plan targets and measures to apply set out in the Appendix to the report, be agreed as the most significant to include in the four monthly reports.**

**8 SERVICE AND BUDGET PLANNING FOR 2001/2002 ONWARDS**

Members' attention was drawn to the following recommendation from the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 20 September 2000.

**RESOLVED**

**That a further meeting of the Panel to consider and agree information for reporting to the Strategy Panel be held on the rising of the Social Services Committee and it was further agreed that the meeting scheduled for 9 October 2000 should be cancelled.**

**9 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2000/01**

**Home Care Staff/Fuel Crisis**

Members endorsed comments made by the Chairman at the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 20 September 2000 which thanked the staff working within the Home Care Service who despite the difficulties arising from the fuel crisis continued to deliver home care services to clients in Buckinghamshire.

**Proposal to Create a Primary Care Trust for the Vale of Aylesbury**

Members' attention was drawn to a report received at the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel on 20 September 2000. This concerned the proposal to create a Primary Care Trust for the Vale of Aylesbury. Members were concerned about the boundaries that had been agreed in the Princes Risborough area. These did not match local authority boundaries and it was felt that this would not assist joint working between agencies.

During discussion it was proposed that these concerns should be raised with the Secretary of State.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the County Council should make representations to the Secretary of State again reaffirming the County Council's preference for co-terminosity with District Council and County Council boundaries.**

## **10 INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION SERVICES**

Members attention was drawn to the following recommendations made at the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 20 September 2000:

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1 That the Social Services Committee support the broad aims to develop the interpretation/translation service**
- 2 That officers should establish the potential demand for interpretation/translation services and the extent of other provision (eg by private and voluntary organisations).**
- 3 That officers should consult departments/agencies about how the service should be funded, managed and promoted.**
- 4 That a further report should be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.**

## **11 CASEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report of the meeting of the Casework Sub-Committee held on 12 July 2000.

## **12 HARLOW HOUSE**

Members' attention was drawn to the item on Harlow House from the meeting of the Casework Sub-Committee held on 12 July 2000, and noted that it had now been agreed that an extension of funding would be made for a further year. This was welcomed by the Committee but concern was expressed over the further continuation of funding. The Chairman of Social Services Committee stated that funding after this time could not be guaranteed, the authority was now required to look in the longer term with pooled budgets with the Health Authority. However, the Council would work towards the continuation of these types of services wherever it could.

## **13 INDEPENDENT AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL**

The Committee received and noted a report of the meeting of the Independent and

Voluntary Sector Panel held on 13 July 2000.

**14 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD**

The Committee received and noted a report from the Children and Young People's Board from the meeting held on 6 July 2000.

**15 PROMOTING AND PURSUING ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN**

Members noted the discussion on adoption that had been held at the meeting of the Children and Young People's Board on 6 July 2000. The Chairman of Council endorsed the Board's congratulations to the Adoption Team for the work they carried out in ensuring that permanent placements were found and that a child's best needs were considered first and foremost. This was supported by the Committee who also thanked the foster and adoptive parents.

**16 UPDATE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY TRUSTS**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Social Services which informed members of the progress made on the establishment of the new Mental Health Trust including the programme for the integration of Health and Social Care. The Committee noted the new timetable for the establishment of the new Trust and that a Mental Health Project Group had been set up to prepare the business case. This included representation from statutory and voluntary sector staff and was led by the Chief Executive of Aylesbury Vale Health Care Trust.

It was reported that a separate Project Group, led by the Assistant Director of Social Services (Adults), was recently created to prepare for the establishment of the Integrated Learning Disability Organisation. It was noted that the Group had members who were part of the Mental Health Project Group this would ensure that the interests of people with learning disabilities continued to be represented in the new Trust during the interim period.

The Committee highlighted concern over those in the learning disabled 16+ age group and noted that this group would need to be looked at as part of the work of the new Trust. Members noted that service users, carers and voluntary organisations, and staff from different organisations involved would be fully consulted on the proposals.

**17 CHIEF OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL'S SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTION UNIT**

The Committee received and noted the Chief Officer of the Council's Sixth Annual Report on the Social Services Inspection Unit. It was reported that the Department of Health (DoH) had identified a number of areas on which to focus. The progress made against the actions identified from previous reports was highlighted in the Action Plan, appended to the report. The Chief Officer introduced the report and explained that a

small structured survey had been carried out to collect the views of a random sample of managers, and that much of the feedback received had been positive.

It was reported that a number of managers had commented on the improvement in the Inspection Unit in recent times. The Chief Officer welcomed the good communication systems that were in place with the Head of Inspection and the invitation to join an inspection of a home for older people, which had taken place on 29 August 2000. The Chief Officer expressed appreciation of the continuing efforts of the Unit to protect some of the most vulnerable people in Buckinghamshire and urged them to strive to continue the improvement in their service.

In terms of the consistency of standards, highlighted in the report, the Committee was informed that systems, such as the counter-signing of reports and also the role of the Advisory Panel helped but that this area remained a constant challenge.

In conclusion, the Committee congratulated the Unit and endorsed the Chief Officer of the Council's Sixth Annual Report.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the Plan and the actions identified be endorsed.**

### **17 SOCIAL SERVICES NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1999-2000**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Social Services which set out the second report on National Performance Indicators and Buckinghamshire's position within it.

It was reported that the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for Social Services built on and supported the wider Best Value arrangements across local government. In Buckinghamshire, it also contributed to the service and business planning process. The system brought together all information about the performance of each social service authority with Councils encouraged to use the information to better understand their own performance and benchmark themselves against others.

Members noted the banding approach taken for 1999/2000, which had been adopted to present data in a more accessible way, the five bands ranged from "investigate urgently" through to "very good".

The Committee welcomed the report and in particular highlighted the following achievements:

- a) performance better than the national average where educational qualifications of children looked after was concerned
- b) three areas in Children's Services, with three indicators ranked as very good and better than national averages



- c) the long term stability of children looked after was reported as good in Buckinghamshire and better than the national average.

It was reported that overall the emerging picture was a balanced one with some clear areas for improvements as well as some real successes to celebrate.

## **18 HEARING THE CUSTOMER'S VIEW**

The Committee received and noted a report from the Director of Social Services which set out information about activity, findings and developments concerning compliments and complaints (Hearing the Customer's View). It was reported that 35 compliments had been received during the five, six month periods, since April 1998 until September 2000. There had been 59 complaints recorded during the same reporting period. This needed to be considered in the context of supporting over 7,500 people.

The Committee congratulated the Director of Social Services and his staff on the results that were reported.

## **19 VOTE OF THANKS**

The Committee, acknowledging that this was the last meeting of the Social Services Committee in its current form, thanked the Chairman for his achievements also thanking the Director of Social Services and the staff of the Social Services Department.

In response, the Chairman stated that he would miss working with the Committee and thanked members for making the work enjoyable, commenting that the outcomes could not have been achieved without the efforts of all of the contributing members.

**CHAIRMAN**

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