

G: REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Annual Social Services Conference

- 1 Four members of the Social Services team attended the annual conference in Harrogate (17 – 19 October). There were some very stimulating and informative presentations on Social Services policies and developments. The topics included Intermediate Care, the Joint Review Teams annual report, Recruitment and Retention, Learning Disability Services and Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- 2 I regard the real benefit of attending the conference to be the ability to meet in an informal way managers and members from other authorities as well as senior staff from some of the leading national providers of services. These are the contacts that are invaluable and provide the justification for attending the conference each year.
- 3 Unfortunately, an excellent conference was overshadowed by the speech of the Secretary of State, Allan Milburn on the last morning.

Social Services Performance

- 4 The Secretary of State named Buckinghamshire as one of the fourteen worst performing Social Services Authorities.
- 5 The method used for reaching this judgement was to add up the scores over the last three years of a series of performance indicators, in the Performance Assessment Framework. In his speech Alan Milburn acknowledged that the current indicators are far from perfect and too complicated.
- 6 A significant reason for the low performance can be attributed to Buckinghamshire's inadequate level of funding combined with high unit costs.
- 7 The Cabinet received a report on our response to the criticism over the performance at its meeting on 5 November and this has been circulated to all members of the County Council.

- 8 On 6 November a meeting was held with Denise Platt, Chief Inspector of Social Services, attended by the Deputy Leader, Mrs Aston, Mr Williams, Mr Beckerleg, Mr Jones and myself
- 9 The challenges we face in Buckinghamshire were explained. An action plan will be developed and a programme of work agreed with the Social Services Inspectorate will be implemented. This meeting was helpful and positive.

Launch of Laing & Buisson Report

- 10 An audience of around 50, drawn from a wide range of members, providers and representatives of services users attended the launch of the report on 8 November.
- 11 One of the main themes of the report is that if the Council is to help overcome funding and supply problems in the residential and nursing home sectors it must develop a strategy to modernise and develop services in partnership with existing and potential partners.
- 12 A useful discussion followed.
- 13 Malcolm Johnson, Professor of Health and Social Policy at Bristol University gave a thought provoking and stimulating address on residential care, the impact of the new standards to be implemented in 2007, as well as a general review of other services and funding issues. This gave rise to a worthwhile exchange of views.

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