



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON PERSONAL CARE**

AGENDA ITEM: 3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON PERSONAL CARE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 2005, COMMENCING AT 9.45 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 10.40 AM IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr B G Allen, Mr T J Fowler, Mr S Kennell, Mr D G Meacock and Mrs P R Wilkinson MBE.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs J Fisk Policy Officer
Mrs K Sutherland Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr A Huxley, Mrs B H Jennings and Mrs F D Roberts MBE

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr B G Allen declared a personal interest in Item 10, Confidential Minutes of 9 March 2005 meeting.

1 MINUTES

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2005, copies of which had been circulated previously, were confirmed.

2 SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL OR SENSORY DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Chairman informed the Committee that the report on Services for Children with Physical or Sensory Disabilities and their Families had been well received at Cabinet, when it was presented on 14 March 2005. The Strategic Directors were pleased that the Committee had taken into account the resource implications of some of their recommendations and the Cabinet accepted the recommendations made, with only one very minor amendment.

A number of Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors had welcomed the findings of the Committee, including Dean Taylor, Strategic Director for

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Community Services, who was keen to increase leisure facilities for children with physical or sensory disabilities and Rodney Royston, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, who was very supportive of allocating keyworkers. Chris Williams, Chief Executive Officer, commended the report as excellent with far-reaching implications.

The report was later presented to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Group, which included frontline professionals from the District Councils, Thames Valley Police, the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC). Again there was a good response and the Policy Officer reported that one of the attendees had asked for an electronic version of the report as they wished to take it to their PCT Executive Committee meeting, which indicated that the report findings would be disseminated further. Mike Colston, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care had also requested that a copy of the report should be sent to the Adult Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board, which had recently been established.

Members were pleased that the report had been so well received. The Committee also commended the final version of the report summary leaflet which had been produced to publicise the Committee's findings more widely.

3 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – THE LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE BICHARD INQUIRY

The Chairman also reported on the Cabinet's response to the Safeguarding Children – The Local Implications of the Bichard Report, which was presented to Cabinet on 4 April 2005.

Again there was a positive response from Cabinet and all recommendations except one were accepted. The Cabinet expressed concerns over the timescale of recommendations three and four, which recommended that the Children and Young People (CYP) portfolio should carry out quality assurance checks on the Warner interviews by June 2005 and that the Schools portfolio should undertake its review of the suitability of the Warner interviews by November 2005. The Cabinet wanted the Schools review to take priority and proposed that the June 2005 date for the CYP review should be pushed back to June 2006.

There was a debate on this proposal and the Chairman reported that he had continued to promote the Committee's original timescale and had argued that the monitoring work undertaken by the CYP portfolio could inform the Schools review. However the Cabinet accepted the recommendation with the revised dates.

A member commented that it would be important to monitor progress towards the June 2006 target date in November 2005. Often when projects were given a long timescale, work was left until the last moment so it would be important to monitor progress to ensure that this did not happen in this case. The Policy Officer reminded members that the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board (CYPSPB) also had a role to play in monitoring the Committee's recommendations and BCC services were due to report on progress to the CYPSPB in December 2005. On 26 April 2005, the Chairman would present the report to the CYPSPB and it would be important to raise the changes in dates at that meeting.

4 INTERMEDIATE CARE

The Chairman updated the Committee on the work of the Joint Working Group on Intermediate Care, which was made up of members drawn from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on Health and Personal Care. The Group had found that in terms of the BCC part of the Intermediate Care service there was a fairly equal provision of service across the county. However, the service provided by Health was not as equitable and this seemed to reflect the fact that there were three separate PCTs, whose services had evolved quite differently. A good illustration of this was the fact that in Chiltern and South Bucks, there were a far higher number of intermediate care beds available than there were in High Wycombe or Aylesbury.

The Group felt that the PCTs needed to work together in order to try and harmonise arrangements and universalise services. A report was drafted for presentation to 25 April Cabinet meeting. However the data that the Group had collected was not robust enough to support all the recommendations that they wished to make. Therefore the report was withdrawn from Cabinet and a letter had been sent to the PCTs and Adult Social Care asking for further information. The Policy Officer advised that the PCTs were working on a joint response.

Another aspect of interest was the differences in the charging policies between the social services and the health provision of care. Also there were concerns about recruitment difficulties, which the Intake Teams were facing, but the Intermediate Care teams did not have similar problems. The Group also raised questions over the skill mix within teams and why the average period of care was two and a half weeks, when intermediate care could be available to clients for up to six weeks.

The Group had learned very recently that an officer in Adult Social Care, was undertaking a review of the social care intake teams. The Group had therefore written to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care to request that the Committee's findings be considered as part of this review.

5 TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING FORWARD

The Committee considered a paper detailing the work that the Committee had undertaken since its inception and the proposed work programme for the new Council. The Policy Officer advised members that proposed changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees could affect the work programme that members had originally agreed.

A member asked if there would be a mechanism in place to ensure that monitoring work from the current Overview and Scrutiny Committees, would be undertaken by the most appropriate Committee, under the new arrangements. The Policy Officer assured members that the monitoring work would be adopted by the new Committees.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that once the new arrangements had been confirmed the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the newly appointed Committees should meet to discuss and agree their future work programmes.

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The Chairman thanked members for their help and encouragement during his four years chairing the Committee, including members who were absent from this meeting, who had made a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee. He also thanked the Policy Officer and Democratic Services Officer for all their hard work and extended special thanks to the Vice-Chairman for his support.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 8 June 2005 at 9.45am in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall.

CHAIRMAN