

## **Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Suggested Work Programme 2005/6**

As agreed at the Adult Services OSC meeting in June, the purpose of this item is for the Committee to agree its work programme for the remainder of 2005 and for 2006.

It is acknowledged that member's time is limited and as a result it is recommended that the Committee undertakes just one in depth review at any one time – three throughout the year - either through a working group or by the whole Committee in meetings. Overview items, performance monitoring and previous review progress reports would supplement the major reviews and be presented to members at full Committee.

The items detailed below are suggestions for detailed reviews. have resulted from a combination of those items carried over from the work programme which went to Cabinet in March; from discussions between the Chairman/Vice Chairman and Strategic Directors/Cabinet Members; and from issues that have arisen during agenda items at Committee meetings since June 2005.

### **Potential In-Depth Review Items**

#### **Engaging Older People**

The Committee heard from Trevor Boyd and Kerry Stevens at the meeting in July that there is a population of older people that doesn't have contact with social services. This is limiting the achievement of the County Council against national performance indicators. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, people who don't see themselves as 'social services clients' could still benefit from the advice and support that social services could provide in enabling them to remain in their own homes.

People may be entitled to budgets for purchasing their own care, or even if they do not qualify for this, the experience and expertise of workers within social care could help with advising about need and signposting to quality services, minimising risk of being taken advantage of.

As the Committee discovered when considering the Adult Social Care Green Paper, the prevention agenda is coming to the fore nationally. It will therefore be increasingly important for social services to develop a role in signposting and early intervention for older people to ensure they remain as healthy and independent as possible.

A review into how services can engage with all older people could support the development of appropriate preventative services in the future. Questions for the Committee to consider could include:

- What are services currently doing to engage older people not currently known to social care?
- What are the barriers to older people seeking advice and support from social services? How can services be developed to overcome these barriers?
- What would be the resource implications and benefits of developing this type of preventative service for the County Council and partners?

- Could the Getting Closer to Communities project provide opportunities for service delivery?

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### **Customer First**

Customer First is one of the key projects for the County Council and is being developed to improve the way in which enquiries are dealt with, providing a better customer service.

Part of Customer First is the development of a Contact Centre, which will be launched in early summer 2006. Discussions are currently taking place between the Customer First team and service to explore the way in which the Contact Centre will handle enquiries on their behalf.

The more self-contained services such as adult learning, heritage services and museums currently provide direct customer services such as bookings and enquires, often outside core hours of the Council. As the Contact Centre is currently being developed, an investigation into how current standards could be maintained, learning from other authorities, could result in useful and timely recommendations for this aspect of Customer First.

Questions for consideration could include:

- What are the special needs of non-office based services?
- How will the Contact Centre meet these needs?
- How have other authorities with contact centres handled these areas?
- How will Customer First ensure maintenance of current levels of customer service?
- What will happen if the Contact Centre opening hours are fewer than the contact hours available to the public now?

### **Voluntary Sector Development**

The voluntary and community sector provides a range of services on behalf of the County Council. It is also source of vital support for many residents whose situations may otherwise deteriorate until health or social care interventions are required. The County Council and its partners have a vested interest in ensuring Buckinghamshire has a strong voluntary and community sector and an infrastructure strategy has been developed by a partnership group led by the voluntary sector (previously the Change Up Consortium).

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could consider how the strategy could deliver the outcome of 'a fit for purpose' voluntary sector in Buckinghamshire. The review could consider how the statutory agencies are involved in supporting development, how the partnership works and whether the changes will meet future demand in Buckinghamshire.

Depending on timing, this piece of work could also address the role of the voluntary sector outlined in the government's White Paper on Adult Social Care.

## **Additional Review Topics Arising From Discussions**

**Adult Social Care White Paper:** The Committee provided comments on the Adult Social Care Green Paper in July 2005. There are now developments in central government to produce a single vision for health and local authority services in the care of adults and older people and a White Paper is due out sometime in early 2006.

The Adult Services Committee could play an important part in considering the implications for the County Council of the White Paper and in questioning how agencies will work together to achieve the outcomes.

**Developing Lifelong Learning:** Asking the question 'How can lifelong learning provision at the County Council be developed to broaden the appeal of learning to all areas of the adult population'. This review could assist the new Learning and Culture service in developing

**Improving Access to Services:** For adult social care services – how do we engage with black and ethnic minority populations to ensure that they are able and welcome to access services when needed. The Committee could explore the barriers to access, and what services could do to improve access. How Buckinghamshire addresses the issue of services for minority populations has been raised by several past inspections, the latest of which was the Older People's Inspection in early 2005.

**Self Assessment:** The Adult Social Care Green Paper proposed the development of self assessment for social care service users. This piece of work could investigate the approach being undertaken by the County Council to developing self assessment for service users, how service users are being involved in the process, and the implications for resources (staff specialism, training and support) to enable a successful implementation.

**Single Assessment with Health:** The single assessment process between social care and health is designed to reduce service users from having to repeat basic information to each professional they are in contact with. A review into this aspect of partnership working could enable members to question how the process is working on the ground, assess the commitment to joint working between statutory agencies, and to consider the benefits to service users in Buckinghamshire.